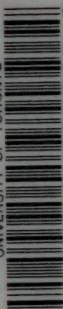


# The Double Life

Gaston Leroux

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO




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# **THE DOUBLE LIFE**



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# The Double Life

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BY

GASTON LEROUX

*Author of "The Mystery of the Yellow Room"*



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JOHN E. KEARNEY

FORTY-THREE WEST TWENTY-SEVENTH STREET  
NEW YORK

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## HISTORICAL PREFACE

I WAS passing through the waiting-room of the *Morning Journal* on a certain evening last year when my attention was drawn to a man seated in a corner. He was dressed in black and his appearance was that of the deepest dejection. In fact upon his face I read the most melancholy despair.

He was not weeping, his eyes were dry and almost expressionless and received the impression of exterior objects like motionless ice. He had placed upon his knees a small oaken chest, ornamented with ironwork. His hands were crossed over this object and hung down, accentuating his dejected appearance.

An attendant told me that he had been awaiting my arrival there three long hours without a movement, without so much as a sigh. I went towards him, and announcing myself, I invited him to enter my office. I showed him a seat, but instead of taking it he came straight to my writing-desk and

placed the little oaken chest on it. "Sir, this chest belongs to you," said he, and his voice seemed far away and indistinct. "My friend, M. Theophraste Longuet, commissioned me to bring it to you. Take it, sir, and believe me, your servant." As he spoke the man bowed and made a motion toward the door. I stopped him, however, and said: "Why, do not go, I cannot receive this box without a knowledge of its contents." He replied: "Sir, I do not know what it contains, it is locked and its key is lost. You might have to break it open to find out the contents." I replied: "Then at least I would like to know to whom I am indebted for bringing it to me."

"My friend, M. Theophraste Longuet, called me Adolphe," replied the man, in a voice so melancholy that it seemed to grow more faint and indistinct with each syllable.

"Well, if M. Longuet had brought me the chest himself, he would most certainly have told me what it contains; I expect that M. Longuet, himself . . ."

"I also, sir," said the man, "but M. Theophraste Longuet is dead, and I am his sole executor."

By this time he had edged his way to the door, and having said these words, he opened the door

and departed. I was taken back by this sudden move and stood staring at the door, then at the chest. Collecting myself I hastily followed the man, but could find no trace of him . . . he had disappeared.

Opening the chest I found it contained a bundle of papers, which at first I regarded with indifference, but which I presently began to examine with greater interest. The deeper I penetrated the more mysterious they appeared to be and the more unexpected were the adventures revealed. In fact, so strange did they seem that I at first could not believe my intelligence, and if the proof had not been in front of me I never would have been convinced of their reality.

It was some time before I could bring myself to realize my position regarding these papers. M. Theophraste Longuet had made me heir to this chest and to the mysteries lying therein. In fact, the secrets of his life.

These papers were written in the form of memoirs and were voluminous. They related with the minutest detail, all the incidents of an exceptionally dramatic existence. M. Theophraste Longuet had by the discovery of a document two centuries old acquired the proof that Louis Dominique Cartouche, the most cunning criminal in the

annals of French crime, and he, Theophraste, were one and the same person. This was indeed a most startling discovery and valuable, for it also put me on the track of the treasures of the famous Cartouche.

He had frequently confided in me facts about his peculiar life, but an untimely death, certain terrible events related in these documents, had prevented him from telling me all. We had been great friends. I had written for a journal he had called his "favorite organ." He had chosen me as his companion and confidant from among many other journalists, not because of any superiority of intellect, but rather, as he used to say, "because a reliable level-headed friend is worth twenty acquaintances, and he found me reliable." There was much significance in this word, "level-headed," as you will learn as you read this narrative.

Having thoroughly examined the papers, I immediately took them to my manager, who was a keen business man. He did not hesitate for a moment to find the "Treasures of Cartouche" a valuable piece for his paper, and it is now a matter of common knowledge how curiously the sum of twenty-five thousand francs, divided into seven sums, were hidden in and around Paris, and how the author of these lines in the history of the chest

which appeared in print in the month of October, in the year 1903,\* touched lightly upon the story found therein.

I have believed it my duty toward the public, and also to the memory of Theophraste Longuet, to publish in volume the authentic history of the reincarnation of Cartouche, written exclusively from the documents found in the little oaken chest, a plain narrative, unembellished by all that which I, poor journalist, had added for the chance reader of my journal.

The reader will find more than a mere treasure. The documents are of the greatest literary value, inasmuch as they contain proof of things hitherto only dreamt of. It is certain that many people imagining themselves of superior intellect will doubt and possibly scoff at many of these mysteries.

The oaken chest contained the secret of the tomb; it also contained the history of the Talpa people written by no less an authority than M. Milfroid, Commissioner of Police, who remained for three weeks with M. Theophraste Longuet in

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\*This date is very important, for it established the fact that my authentic history of Cartouche had appeared before Mr. Frank Brentano's book, and that one two books the day after that of Mr. Maurice Bernard.

the subterranean home of those monsters. This last infernal comedy would most certainly have met with incredulity had not it been vented by one of the most honest and intellectual of Police Commissioners. M. Milfroid was a most noble and accomplished character, and he could place music, painting, sculptors among his accomplishments.

Now before closing this preface I must warn my readers that they will find many strange things in the narrative, weird and almost supernatural. And I would say that unless he is possessed with great level-headedness, he must not read the secrets of the *Life of Theophraste Longuet*.

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# **THE DOUBLE LIFE**



# THE DOUBLE LIFE

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## CHAPTER I

*M. Theophraste Longuet Wishes to Inform Himself and Visits Historical Monuments*

THE strange adventures of M. Theophraste Longuet, which ended so tragically, originated in a visit to the prison of the Conciergerie, on the 28th of June, 1899. Therefore this history is modern; but the writer would say that, having read and examined all the papers and writings of M. Theophraste Longuet, its recentness does not detract from its sensational character.

When M. Longuet rang the bell of the Conciergerie he was accompanied by his wife, Marceline, and M. Adolphe Lecamus. The latter was a close friend. It was his physique that had attracted M. Longuet. He was not handsome, but was tall and

well built, and every movement showed that strength which M. Longuet lacked. His forehead was broad and convex, his eyebrows were heavy and straight. He had a habit of every now and then lifting them gracefully to express his disdain of others and his confidence in himself. His grey eyes twinkled under near-sighted spectacles, and the straight nose, the proud arch of the underlip, surmounted by a dark, flowing mustache, the square outline of his chin and his amaranthine complexion, all combined to accentuate his strong appearance.

He had been employed as postmaster at Turin, and had traveled considerably. He had crossed the sea. This was also an attraction to M. Longuet, who had never crossed anything, unless it was the Seine.

M. Longuet had been a rubber stamp manufacturer, but had made sufficient money to retire at an early age. He was the antithesis of Adolphe in build and character. His face showed no marked intelligence, and his slight build lent almost insignificance to his appearance. He had, however, imagination, and he used to laughingly say to Adolphe: "Even if I haven't traveled, I run just as much risk in walking the streets of Paris as one who crosses the ocean in ships. Might not houses

collapse or pots of flowers fall on one's head?" Thus he lived a monotonous existence, relieved only by the morbid workings of his mind.

Before his retirement he had worked hard and had little time to study, therefore, now he had leisure, it occurred to him to occupy his time in improving his mind. It was with this intention that we find him visiting the various buildings of historic interest around Paris.

On ringing the bell of the Conciergerie the iron door turned heavily on its hinges. A warden shaking the keys demanded of Theophraste his permit. He had anticipated this and had received it that morning from the Prefect of Police. He tendered it with satisfaction, looking around at his companion with the confidence of anticipations realized.

The gate-keeper turned the little company over to the Chief Warden, who was passing at the time. Marceline was much impressed, and as she leaned on Adolphe's arm, thought of Marie Antoinette's dungeon, the Grevin Museum, and all the mysteries of this famous prison. The Chief Warden said: "Are you French?" to which Theophraste replied, laughingly, for he was typically French: "Do we look like English people?"

"This is the first time," explained the Chief

Warden, "that any French people have asked permission to visit the Conciergerie. French people are indifferent to things of interest in their own country." "They are wrong, sir," replied Theophraste, wiping his spectacles. "In the monuments of the past we have foundations of the future." This idea rather pleased him, and he looked for approval to Adolphe and Marceline. He continued following the Warden. "As for me, I am an old Parisian and would have visited all these places of interest long ago but for my work. I have worked hard at my trade and the only leisure I got was when I went to bed. That time is over now, sir, and now is the time for me to educate myself," and he struck the century-old pavement with the end of his green umbrella.

Passing a small door and a large wicket, they descended some steps and were in the guard-room. The first thing to draw attention made Adolphe laugh, Marceline blush, and Theophraste turn in disgust. It was the capital of a Gothic column carved to symbolize the story of Abelard and Heloise. Abelard was pleading with the Carion Fulbert for his clemency, while the latter was taking the child from Heloise.

"It is strange," said M. Longuet, "that in the name of art the Government should tolerate such

obscenities. That capital is a disgrace to the Conciergerie and should be removed." M. Lecamus did not agree, and said: "Many things are excusable in art if they are done in the right spirit."

However, the subject was dropped and they were soon interested in other parts of these old historic buildings. The Chief Warden conducted them through the Tower of Cæsar, into the Silver Tower, or Tower of Bon Bec. They thought of the thousand of illustrious prisoners who had been incarcerated in prison for years. Marceline could not keep from thinking of the martyred Marie Antoinette, of Elizabeth, and the little Dauphin, and of the waxen gendarmes in the museum, who watched over the Royal family. All this impressed her, and her mind was continually carried back to those stirring times. The Silver Tower had been transformed into a record office, and the modern writing desks were in striking contrast to the old medieval walls. Returning through the guard-room, they directed their steps towards the Bon Bec Tower. Theophraste had read about this tower and imagined he knew it well, so wishing to appear well informed, asked of the Warden, "Is it not there, sir, that the last meal of the Girondists was served? You ought certainly to tell us exactly where to find the table, and also the place which

Camille des Moulins occupied." The Warden replied that the *Environdists* had dined in the chapel and that they would soon visit it.

"I wish to know Camille des Moulins' place," said Theophraste, "because he was a friend of mine."

"And mine also," said Marceline, with a look towards Adolphe, which seemed to say, "Not as much as you, Adolphe."

But Adolphe laughed and said Camille was not a Girondist, he was a Franciscan friar, a friend of Danton, a Septembrian.

Theophraste was vexed, and Marceline protested that if he had been anything of the sort Lucille would not have married him. Adolphe did not insist, but as they had by now reached the chamber of torture, he feigned condescendingly to be interested in the labels which adorned the drawers decorating the walls, "Hops," "Cinnamon," "Spice," etc.

"Here is the room in question. They have transformed it into the doctor's store-room."

"It is just as well, perhaps," said Theophraste, "but not so impressive."

Adolphe and Marceline were of the same opinion. They were not at all impressed. Here was

the famous torture chamber. They expected something else. They were disillusioned. Outside, when viewed from the court of the Sundial, the formidable aspect of those old feudal towers, the last vestige of the palace of the French monarchy, momentarily brought fear and awe to their minds. That prison had stood a thousand years, had known so many tragedies, death rattles, legendary miseries, hidden secrets. It seemed that one only had to step inside to find an inquisition court in some dark corner, damp and funereal. Here seemed to be all the tragedies of the history of Paris, as immortal as the very walls.

What a disillusion here in these towers with a little plaster and paint they had made the office of the Director of Records, the store-room of the prison doctor. One could carouse here where once the hangman held sway. One could laugh where only the cries of the tortured were heard.

Now there would have been nothing unusual about this visit to the Conciergerie but for a very extraordinary incident which occurred after the party had left the torture chamber. The incident was weird and inexplicable, and while I read M. Longuet's own description of it, I confess I found it impossible to believe. Therefore I went to the

Chief Warden, who had shown the party round the prison, and asked for his account of the incident.

He gave it to me in the following words:

Sir, the affair passed as usual, and the lady, the two gentlemen and I visited the kitchen of St. Louis, which is now used as a store-house for plaster. We proceeded towards the dungeon of Marie Antoinette, which is now the chapel. On the way I showed them the crucifix, before which she prayed before mounting the cart which is now in the Director's room. I told the man with the green umbrella that we had been obliged to transfer the Queen's arm-chair to the Director's room, because the English visitors had carried away pieces from it as souvenirs. We had by this time arrived at the end of the Street of Paris—you know the street that leads from Paris to the Conciergerie. We passed through that frightfully dark passage, where we found the grating behind which they cut off the hair of the women before execution. You know that it is the very same grating. It is a passage where never a ray of sunlight penetrates. Marie Antoinette walked through that passage on the day of her death. It is there that the old Conciergerie stands just as it was hundreds of years ago.

I was describing the Street of Paris, when suddenly the man with the green umbrella cried out in a voice so unlike the previous voice, so strangely that the other gentleman and lady looked startled: "Zounds, it is the walk of the Straw Dealers." He said it in a weird tone and his whole attitude was changed. He used the expression, zounds, twice. I told him he was mistaken, that the walk of the Straw Dealers is what we call to-day the Street of Paris. He answered me in the same strange voice: "Zounds, you cannot tell me that! I have lain there on that straw like the others!" I remarked to him, smilingly, although not without a feeling of fear, that no one had lain on that straw in the alley of the Straw Dealers for more than two hundred years.

He was just about to answer me when his wife intervened. "What are you saying, Theophraste?" said she. "Do you wish to teach Monsieur his business? You have never been to the Conciergerie before." Then he said in his natural voice, the voice by which I had known him at first: "That is so, I have never been here before."

I could not understand then at all, but thought the incident closed, when he did something stranger still.

We visited the Queen's Dungeon, Robespierre's

Dungeon, the Chapel of the Girondists, and that little gate, which is still the same as when the unfortunate prisoners, called the Septembrians, leaped over it to be massacred in the court. We were now in the Street of Paris. There was a little stairway on the left which we did not descend. It led to the cellars which I did not deem necessary to show, as it was dark and difficult of access. The gate at the bottom of this staircase is closed by a grating which is perhaps a thousand years old—possibly more. The gentleman, whom they called Adolphe, proceeded with the lady toward the door leading out of the guard-room, but without saying a word the man with the green umbrella descended the little staircase. When he was at the grating he cried out in that strange, weird voice: "Well, where are you going? It is here." The gentleman and the lady stopped as if petrified. The voice was terrible, and nothing in the outward appearance of the man would make you believe that the voice came from him. In spite of my fear I ran to the head of the stairs. I was thunderstruck. He ordered me to open the grating, and I don't know how I obeyed him. It was as if I had been hypnotized. I obeyed mechanically. Then when the grating was opened he disappeared in the darkness of the cellar. Where had he gone? How

could he find his way? Those subterranean passages of the Conciergerie are plunged in frightful darkness and nobody has been down there for centuries and centuries.

He had already gone too far for me to stop him. He had hypnotized me. I stayed about a quarter of an hour at the entrance of that dark hole. His companions were in the same state as I was. It was impossible to follow him. Then suddenly we heard his voice, not his first voice, but his second. I was so startled I had to cling to the grating for support. He cried out: "It is thou, Simon l'Anvergust." I could not answer. He passed near me, and as he passed it seemed to me that he put a scrap of paper in his jacket pocket. He leaped up the steps with one bound and rejoined the lady and gentleman. He gave them no explanation. As for me, I ran to open the door of the prison for them. I wanted to get them outside. When the wicket was open and the man with the green umbrella was walking out, without apparent reason he said: "We must avoid the wheel." I don't know what he meant, as there was no carriage near.

## CHAPTER II

### *An Explanation from Theophraste*

NOW in reading the last chapter one would immediately think that M. Longuet had gone mad. What had possessed him? Where did he go? In order that you might fully understand his peculiar actions I will give you the extract from his memoirs relating to this incident. He writes:

I am a man of sound body and mind. I am a good citizen and recognize all the laws. I believe laws are necessary for the proper regulation of society. I dislike heartily any formalities, and in determining my lines of conduct I have always chosen the simplest way.

I dislike imaginative people, and the occult has always been repulsive to me. However, this is not through want of understanding, for my friend, Adolphe Lecamus, had given himself up to the

study of spiritualism. Whoever teaches spiritualism teaches foolishness, and the desire to question the spirits of the dead by means of the planchette seems to me to be beyond belief, it is grotesque. However, I have assisted at some of Adolphe's séances which he had given for the benefit of Marceline and myself. I have even taken a certain part in them, desiring to prove the absurdity of his theories. My wife and I once rested our hands on a table for a quarter of an hour waiting for it to move. Nothing happened, and we laughed heartily at him. However, my wife was more sympathetic, and was inclined to be a little more serious. Women are always more susceptible to the occult and ready to believe in the mysterious. Adolphe bought her books, which she read eagerly, and he amused himself sometimes by willing her to sleep, by making passes with his hands and breathing on her eyes. It seemed foolish, and I should not have allowed it from any one else, but I have always had a liking for Adolphe, and know that it amuses him. Marceline and he said that I was a skeptic. However, I am not a skeptic, as a skeptic is one who doubts all. I believe in progress, but do not believe that one person having an unnatural influence over another tends towards

progress. Therefore I am not a skeptic, but rather a philosopher.

During his travels Adolphe read a great deal. I have had to work hard all my life, therefore, while he is an idealist, I am a materialist.

It seems necessary for me to thus describe my character so that it may be well understood that the happenings of the day before yesterday were not due to any occult reasons. I visited the prison in just the same manner as I would go to a store to buy a cravat. I wanted to learn, that is all. Having sold my business, I have more leisure, and so I said to myself: "I will visit the interesting places of the city of Paris." Fate decreed that the Conciergerie was the first place to be visited. I do not know whether I really regret it.

At present I am calm and collected and can relate all I remember of what happened.

While we were in the Towers nothing happened worth recording. I remember trying to picture to myself in the little room which looked like a grocery store all the horrors of the place, how the executioners and their assistants approached the prisoners with their monstrous machines, how so many illustrious persons were martyred, and all the terrible griefs and agonies which had been witnessed within these walls. But the transformation

had taken all the romance away, and the labels, "Senna," "Hops," etc., did not inspire imagination. Even the Bon Bec Tower, also called Bavarde, on account of the terrible cries which were heard in it, has been changed into offices. However, I must not complain. These are all the signs of progress and a more enlightened age.

But we penetrated into that part of the Conciergerie which has changed little during all these centuries, which had not been spoiled by the plasterer and in which all the stones could tell their own history; then it was that a most inexplicable fever took possession of me, and when we had reached the dark end of the walk of the "Straw Dealers," I cried out from my soul, "Zounds! this is the walk of the Straw Dealers."

I turned around immediately to find out who had uttered these words. They were all staring at me, and I was convinced that it was myself who had cried out. It seemed so strange. The voice was not like mine, but it had emanated from me. Even now it is unaccountable.

The Warden pretended that we had passed the walk of the "Straw Dealers." I told him that I knew the place better than he, for I had lain there on the straw myself. But I had never been in the Conciergerie before, and yet I was sure of it. It

is difficult to explain. While we walked through the chapel of the Girondists, and the Warden was explaining the story to us, I played with my umbrella. I tried to appear natural and collected. Although the things which happened were quite natural, and not the result of any effort, a cold perspiration seized me and I shook like a leaf. I remember that I found myself at the bottom of the stairs, standing before a grating. I was endowed with almost superhuman strength. Shaking the grating, I called out for the others to follow. However, the others had gone ahead and did not hear. I called to the Warden to open the grating. I don't know what would have happened if he had not done so, quickly. I was crazy, and yet everything was natural to me. Truly, I was in a state of great nervous excitement, but everything was lucid to me. Never before had I seen so clearly as when in that dark cellar. Never before had I recognized a place so vividly as when I was down there where I had never been before. My God! I did not know them, and yet I recognized them.

Without hesitating I groped around, feeling the stones in the dark, and my feet trod a soil which seemed familiar but which had not been trodden for centuries. I seemed to know these very stones, for-

gotten in the darkness of those cellars. I slid the length of the damp flagstones as if I had been accustomed to the way. My finger-nails came in contact with sharp stones in the wall and I counted the seams as I passed. I knew that if I turned round I would see a certain square light in the distant gallery, a single ray in all this place where the sun had forgotten to shine since France's history had begun. I turned and saw it, and I felt my heart beat violently.

Here there was a momentary interruption in the writings. M. Longuet, having explained what had happened to him in that strange hour in the Conciergerie, was greatly agitated. It was with difficulty he remained master of his thoughts. It was difficult to follow them; they seemed to come and go, just leaving faint traces on the paper of the record.

He resumed the pen with feverish hand. Continuing to busy himself with the subterranean passages, he writes:

It is necessary to pause here as one pauses at the edge of a precipice. My very thoughts make me shiver! . . .

And the Bavarde, there it stands. There are the

walls which have helped to make history. It is not on high in the glorious sunlight that the Bavarde tells its history. It is here in the blackness of the earth. There are some large iron staples in the wall here. The very chains of Ravailac! I recall no more; but towards that ray, the sole ray of light, as eternal and immovable as the very walls—towards that small square beam, which since the beginning of things has taken and kept the shape of a sentinel, I advanced. There was some impelling force which urged me on. I rushed ahead while the fever was in me and seemed to intoxicate me. Suddenly I paused, my feet seemed held to the ground and my fingers ran sliding and pressing the length of the wall. What it was that impelled my finger, what was the thought, I cannot tell. All at once I let my umbrella fall, and drawing my pen-knife, began to scrape steadily between two stones. The dust and cement powdered away easily, and soon my knife struck something between the stones, and I pulled the thing out.

This is why I am sure I was not mad. This thing has been before my eyes. In my most peaceful hours I, Theophraste Longuet, see it in my writing-desk. It is not I who am mad, but this thing itself. It is a piece of torn paper, stained . . . a document of which it is easy to tell

the age and calculated to plunge any man into the deepest consternation.

The paper is, as you must know, terribly decayed. The dampness has eaten into half the words, which seem, on account of their reddish tint, to have been written with blood.

I took the document to the small ray of light, and on looking it over my hair seemed to stand on end with horror. *There I could recognize my own handwriting*, and I give you this precious and mysterious document clearly translated:

“Dead and buried all his treasures after the Treachery of April 1st. Go, take a look in the bar-room! Look at the furnace! Look at the weather-cock! Dig a while and you shall be rich!”

## CHAPTER III

### *A Search and a Discovery*

M. ADOLPHE LECAMUS and Marceline thought M. Theophraste's actions strange, but they were too much occupied with an affair of their own to attach very great importance to them. However, M. Theophraste concealed his anxiety and pretended that the visit to the Conciergerie was quite a natural occurrence. He had gone down in the cellars just to satisfy a natural curiosity, not being one of those who make a superficial inspection of things of interest.

The following day, M. Theophraste, under the pretext of putting his affairs in order, shut himself up in his office and gave instructions for nobody to disturb him. Leaning over the balcony he looked out upon the little square of Anvers and reflected over the happenings of yesterday. There was nothing in the view to distract him. He was accustomed to the scene below: nurses pushing

perambulators gossiping over the latest news, and a few professors walking towards the Rollie College. The Avenue Touraine rang with the shouts of college students who had come before the lecture hour.

Nothing had changed; the world was just the same. To-day, like yesterday, or like the day before yesterday. The people were going to their business just the same. Even Nidine Petito, the wife of the Italian professor, who lived in the apartment below, was the same. She began to play the "Carnival of Venice" on the piano just as she did every day.

Nothing had changed; thus he reflected. On turning round he could see amongst his papers on the desk, the document. Did it really exist? He had passed a restless night and was now attributing his strange adventure to a bad dream—but no, it could not be that, for there was the paper on his desk, in his own handwriting, and written in blood. Good God! perhaps it was his own blood. What thoughts, what thoughts!

Theophraste passed his hand over his forehead. He was perspiring and restless. Suddenly breathing a sigh and slapping his thigh with his hand, he appeared to have come to a definite resolution, and put the paper carefully away in his portfolio.

He remembered that Signor Petito, the Italian professor, was an expert in handwriting and that he had had experience in engraving. He would take the document to him and ask his opinion. His friend Adolphe was also interested in graphology, but only in a spiritual way, and so he would not confide in him. There was already too much mystery in the affair without mixing it up with spiritualism and mediums.

He had only known the professor to bow to on the stairs, and so in presenting himself he was introduced. The professor greeted him cordially, and after the usual formalities, Theophraste broached the subject of his visit. He produced the paper, and a letter which he had written some time previously. "Signor Petito," he commenced, "having heard of your renown as an expert in handwriting, I would be grateful to you if you would examine this letter, and this document, and give me the result of your observations. I may say that there is no connection between the two papers."

Theophraste was not in the habit of lying, and blushed redder than a peony. But Signor Petito was already deeply engrossed in the examining of the two papers. His scholarly eye looked over one, then the other. He placed them together, held them up to the light, passed his hand over the writ-

ing, and measured them. Then he laughed, showing his white teeth.

"Monsieur Longuet," said he, "it is not necessary for me to keep you waiting long for a reply. This document is in a very bad condition, but the specimen of handwriting can still be read. They are in every way similar to the letter, and I would swear before any tribunal that those two handwritings have been traced by the same hand."

Then he entered into details. "A child," he said, "could not be mistaken about it." He pointed out how this duplicate writing was identically angular. "We call a handwriting angular, Monsieur, when the hair-strokes which join the bottom of the letters and the separate letters are at an acute angle to the down-strokes of the letters. Do you understand? Compare this hook and that one, those hair-strokes with these others, and all those letters getting larger, larger in both writing and in equal measure. But what a clear writing, Monsieur; I have never seen such clear writing before. As clear as if cut with a knife."

By this time Theophraste had become white with nervousness. Signor Petito thought that he was going to faint. However, he arose, picked up the document and the letter, and having thanked Signor Petito, he went out.

He wandered the streets for a long time, and at last turning down a small street, he stood in front of an old door in the Rue Inger. Entering, he found himself in a narrow, dark passage. A man came out of a back room, and on recognizing Theophraste, greeted him in a friendly way. He was wearing a square paper cap, and had on a black gown which reached down to his feet.

"Good-day, Theophraste, good-day. What happy chance has brought you here?"

As it had been two years since they had last seen each other they at first spoke of family matters and other generalities. Ambrose spoke of his trade of engraving visiting cards. He had been a printer. He had been a printer in the province, but having put all he had into an invention for a new paper, he had failed. He was a distant cousin to Marceline, and when he was deep in financial troubles, Theophraste had come to his rescue.

Theophraste seated himself on the wicker chair in the small room which served as a workshop. This room was lighted by a large window reaching from floor to ceiling.

"Ambrose, you are an expert. No one can approach you in the knowledge of papers, eh?"

"That is not quite true," said Ambrose, "but I can judge a good paper."

"You understand all kinds?"

"All kinds."

"If some one showed you a piece of paper, could you tell the age of it?"

"Yes," said Ambrose, "I could. I have published a treatise on the water-marks of papers used in France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. That study was accepted by the Academy."

"I know, and I have great respect for your knowledge."

"Well, the thing is simple. The oldest paper showed a plain, glossy surface, but soon there appeared wide lines crossed at intervals by perpendicular lines, both giving the impression of a metal trellis over which the paste had been spread. From the fourteenth century they used these as a maker's mark, and in the end they designed figures in brass wire, initials, words, emblems of all sorts—these are the water-marks. Every sheet of water-marked paper tells its tale, and the year of its make can be detected, but the difficulty is to decipher it. This necessitates a little practice."

Theophraste opened his portfolio and took out the paper.

"Can you tell me the exact date of this?"

Ambrose put on his eyeglass and took the paper to the daylight.

"There is the date," he said, "172—, the last figure is rubbed out. It must be of the eighteenth century."

"Oh," said Theophraste, "I saw that date quite well, but do you really think that the paper is of that century? Does not the date lie? That is what I want to know."

Ambrose showed him the center of the paper. "See?"

Theophraste said nothing. Then Ambrose lit a small lamp and held the paper up before it. In illuminating the document one could detect in the thickness of the paper the design of a crown.

"Theophraste," said Ambrose excitedly, "that paper is exceedingly rare. That mark is almost unknown, for a very little paper was made with that sign, which is called the Crown of Thorns. That paper, my dear Theophraste, was made in 1721."

"You are sure?"

"Yes, but tell me," cried Ambrose, who could not conceal his surprise, "how is it that this document, dated 1721, could be by all visible marks in your handwriting?"

Theophraste said nothing, but getting up and putting the document back into the portfolio, he hastened out of the house.

And so here was proof enough. He could doubt it no longer. This paper, dated in the beginning of the eighteenth century, in the time of the Regents, this sheet that he had sought for in the prison, distinctly bore his own handwriting. He had written on that sheet, he, Theophraste Longuet, late maker of rubber stamps, who retired last week at the age of 41—he wrote on that sheet of paper these incomprehensible words in 1721. However, it did not want Signor Petito or Ambrose to prove it to him. He knew it himself. Everything within him cried out, “It is your paper!” And so instead of being Theophraste Longuet, son of John Longuet, master gardener to the Ferte sous Jonaise, he had been in the past some one he did not know, but who had been reborn in him. Yes, that was it, and he now had the great desire to recall having lived 200 years.

Who was he? What was his name? In which body had his immortal soul elected momentarily to live? He felt certain that these questions would not remain long unanswered. Was it true that some of the things ignored in his present existence constituted part of his past life? What was meant by certain expressions spoken in the Conciergerie? Who, then, was Simon de Anvergust, whose name had been twice repeated by his burning lips?

"Yes, yes, the name, in former times my own, his also," wrote Theophraste in his journal, "arose from my awakened brain, and knowing who I was, I recalled the whole life lived in former years, and I read in a flash from that piece of paper all the details of a past life."

Monsieur Theophraste Longuet, to state the matter frankly, had not arrived at the conclusion without having, in these incoherent lines, wandered before. The happenings of these days were too unusual. Imagine, he was simple-minded, a little heavy, a little foppish, he had never invented anything in his life. He was just an amiable, honest citizen, stupid and headstrong. He had no religion. He left that to the women, and without declaring his atheism, used to say: "When one dies, it is forever." However, now he had discovered by an extraordinary incident, that one never dies. He had to support this, and in doing so declared that not even those in the business, in occult science, frequenting spirits daily, could have such palpable proof. In the end Theophraste made his resolution quickly.

This anterior existence could no longer be denied, although he knew nothing about it. In the uncertainty of his mind he could not associate the date 1721 with his visit to the Conciergerie.

However, he came to this final conclusion. In 1721 he had been confined in the Conciergerie Prison, probably as a prisoner of state. He could not admit for a second that he, Theophraste Longuet, had been shut up, even under Louis XV, as a common criminal. In a solemn moment, perhaps before being put to torture, he had drawn up this document and hidden the paper between the stones in the dungeon, and passing by there two centuries later, had found it again. This was simple enough and not the result of any supernatural inspiration. The facts themselves were enough.

Certain words of the document were in themselves quite natural and of the most momentous importance. These were "Treasure . . . treachery of the first of April."

It was with these words that he hoped to discover his identity. First, he had been rich and powerful. The words about the treasure showed conclusively that the man had been rich and that he had buried his treasure. He had been powerful and had been betrayed. Theophraste had in his mind that the treason had been a memorable treason, perhaps historic—the treachery of the first of April.

Yes, all the oddities and all the mysteries of the document left at least a glimpse of something cer-

tain: that he had been a great personage, that he had buried his treasures; and that after having buried them mysteriously, more mysteriously still revealed their existence, at the price of much cunning; perhaps at the price of his own blood. Without doubt those tinted words had been written with blood.

Later he proposed to ask a distinguished chemist to examine it. The treasures belonged to him, and if necessary he would use this document to establish his right to them.

Theophraste was not rich. He had retired from business with a modest little income. He had a comfortable little house with a garden and bowling alley. However, this was little, with the somewhat extravagant tastes of Marceline, and so the treasure would be most acceptable. He therefore applied himself diligently to the research.

It must be said, though, to his credit, that he was much more puzzled by the mystery of his personality than by the mystery of the treasure, and that he resolved to temporarily suspend his research until the time when he could at least give a name to this personage that he had been—Theophraste Longuet in 1721. That discovery which interested him most came to be in his mind the key of all the others.

That which astonished him most was the sudden development of what he called his "historical instinct," the instinct which had been deficient in him all his life, but which had been revealed to him with the suddenness and force of a clap of thunder in the depths of the Conciergerie. In one moment, the Other, as he used to say in conversing of this great 18th-century personage, had possessed him. It was the Other who had found the document; it was the Other who had cried out in the Conciergerie; it was the Other who had called to Simon l'Anvergust, and since the Other had disappeared, Theophraste did not know what had become of him. He sought him in vain; he examined himself; he searched his very soul.

Before this adventure Theophraste had no curiosity about the beginning or ending of things, he had not wasted time in wondering over philosophical mysteries; in his vanity he had always shrugged his shoulders at such things. However, now things were different; here was a quiet citizen, with little scientific knowledge, who had to prove that a manufacturer of India rubber in the year 1899 had been shut up in a dungeon after having buried treasures in 1721. But the revelation of this extraordinary fact had come to him sponta-

neously and remained so fixed in his mind that he resolved to probe the matter to the bottom.

His instinct abandoned him momentarily and he would search books and discover who this powerful, rich person was who had been betrayed on April 1st; which April 1st? This remained to be determined. He haunted the libraries from that time on. He marshaled before him the Premiers of the Kingdom. He found nothing to give him a clue. Some dukes and peers, some illustrious generals, some great financiers, a few princes of the blood. He stopped an instant at Law, but he was too dissipated; at Maurice de Saxe, who ought to have won the Battle of Fontenoy; at the Count du Barry, who had had the most beautiful mistress in Paris. He feared that perhaps he had been the Count de Charolais, who distinguished himself by his debauches, and killed the thatchers on the roofs by shooting at them. He was forty-eight hours the Cardinal of Palegria, but was disgusted when he learned that his Eminence had been a farm hand for the Duchess of Maine. It was refreshing to find in some corner of history a sympathetic count or lord that the writers of the epoch had adorned in engaging colors and on whom they had bestowed some virtues. But Theophraste soon saw that all these would have to be abandoned. For

none of them had the principal qualifications of having been shut up in the Conciergerie in 1721, or having been betrayed on an April 1st.

However, in the Journal of the Barber, he discovered a bastard of the Regent, about whom were some startling facts which precipitated him into a state of great excitement.

Before entering into the details, however, of this discovery, we will return to the doings of Marceline and M. Adolphe Lecamus.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Some Philosophy and a Song*

LET us leave Paris awhile and return to the little estate on the banks of the Marne, which Theophraste generally moved to with the first rays of the July sun. This year he was to go there before Marceline and his friend, Adolphe, who had been commissioned to survey the timbers on some lands elsewhere. Thus these last few days he could spend alone in security and peace to attend to this unusual treatise which his new position in the world had given him.

The name of the house was "Villa Flots d'Azure." Theophraste had given it this name against the wishes of Adolphe, who protested that the name was for a villa near the sea. He had replied with logic that he had often gone to the Preport, and that he had always see the sea green; that he knew the Marne, and that on account of the reflected blue sky the water seemed blue. Do they

not say "the beautiful blue Danube"? It was not only the ocean that had blue waves, so he did not see why he should not call his villa on the Marne "Villa Flots d'Azure."

That day was the anniversary of their marriage. Theophraste was very fond of Marceline, and these anniversaries were always the occasion for much merry-making. Marceline also loved Theophraste, and saw no reason why she should not like Adolphe equally as well, whereas, on the other side, Adolphe adored Marceline and would have died for Theophraste. On reflection, the name "Villa Flots d'Amour" would have been more appropriate than "Villa Flots d'Azure," such harmony existed therein.

Theophraste shook Adolphe's hand effusively. He complimented his wife on her beauty. He had his green umbrella that day, and in making his congratulations twirled it in a fashion, as he thought, resembling the manner in which they used canes in the beginning of the eighteenth century. He was not a vain person, but he knew by this scientific miracle that he had been a great man two hundred years ago, and he felt that he should convey the impression that he had moved among great people and affairs.

It was their custom upon their return to their

country house to invite a few friends to a party to celebrate the occasion. Upon this occasion Theophraste was at his best. He was in high spirits, and while passing the good word to the gentlemen, made flattering speeches to the ladies. The table was set in the garden under a tent where the guests assembled. After a while the conversation turned to the latest doings in angling. M. Lopard had caught a trout of three pounds; old M. Tartoush had cast his line on Sunday—having caught nothing, complained that people made too much noise shooting during the week, and drove the fish from these waters. All joined in the conversation and gave their experiences except M. Theophraste.

He kept silent. He found the topic too commonplace and felt a desire to raise its level. He wanted it to drift into some subject related to that preoccupying his mind. After awhile he was able to get Adolphe interested in the subject of ghosts. From ghosts the conversation led on to spiritualism. One lady knew a somnambulist and related some strange stories which were calculated to work upon the imagination of the company. Adolphe, upon this, explained the spiritualistic point of view of the phenomena of somnambulism, and cited well-known authorities. He seemed quite

in his element, and finally reached the point desired by Theophraste, the transmigration of souls and reincarnation.

"Is it possible," said Marceline, "that a soul comes back to live in its body? You have often told me so, Adolphe, but it seems to me that one's reason strongly repulses such an hypothesis."

"Nothing is lost in Nature," replied Adolphe, positively. "Neither the soul nor the body. All is transformed, the soul as well as the body. The reincarnation of souls at the end of a century is a doctrine which goes back to such great antiquity that the ancient philosophers do not deny it."

"If one's soul returned to a body," said Marceline, "one would surely know it."

"Not always," said Adolphe, "but sometimes."

"Ah, sometimes?" asked Theophraste, who was by this time becoming intensely interested.

"Yes, there are cases. For instance: Ptolemy Cæsar, son of Cæsar and Cleopatra, who was king of Egypt before Christ, remembered well to have been Pythagoras, a Greek philosopher, who lived 600 years before."

"Impossible!" cried the ladies, and the gentlemen smiled skeptically.

"You need not laugh, gentlemen. It is impossible to be more serious. Our actual transforma-

tion, which is the final word in science, is in full accord with the theory of reincarnation. What is transformation except the idea that living things transform themselves, progressing one into another? Nature presents herself to us under the aspect of a spark, elaborately perfecting without ceasing to create, to attain an ideal which will be the millennium. Whatever Nature does for the body she does for the soul. It can be proved, for I have studied this side a great deal, and it is the original of all sciences.

Monsieur Adolphe was not understood by the company, a fact of which he was inwardly proud. He liked to feel a superiority of intellect, and often he would raise the conversation above the level of his audience just to gratify his vanity. He touched on many points which only need be referred to lightly here in order to convince skeptics that the extraordinary history of Theophraste is founded on a most scientific basis.

"The transmigration of souls was taught in India," said Adolphe; "the cradle of the genus human, then in Egypt, then in Greece. They chanted its mysteries in the name of Orpheus. Pythagoras, who continued the teaching, did not admit with the philosophers on the banks of the Ganges that the soul traveled over the cycle of

all animal existence. He made it come back, for example, into a pig."

"There are some men," said Madame Beulie, "who still have the souls of pigs."

"Without doubt," said Adolphe, smiling; "but what Pythagoras says is that we must not conclude from that, that pigs have the souls of men. Plato also adopts this doctrine. It is the first which gave in the Phidon the proof that souls do not exile themselves forever and that they come back to animate bodies anew."

"Oh, if we could only get proof of that it would be nothing for me to die," declared old Mlle. Tabouret, who had a mortal terror of dying.

"Here are the proofs," continued Adolphe. "They are two in number. One is taken from the general law of Nature, the other from human nature. First, Nature is governed by the laws of contraries, and from that we see that while death succeeds life, all would end by being absorbed in death, and Nature would one day come to an end like Endymion. Therefore I say that we exist after death.

"Secondly, if after consulting the general laws of Nature we turn to our own minds, we will find there the same dogma attested by the fact of resemblance. 'To learn,' said Plato, 'is nothing

but to recollect. Since our souls learn, they must have a resemblance. What does it recollect except to have lived, and to have lived in another body? Why can we not believe that in leaving the body while it is animate at this time it can animate several others in succession?" I quote Plato literally," remarked Adolphe.

Then he passed from Plato to a modern authority. "Charles Fournier has said: 'Where is the old man who has not truly wished to be born again, and to use in another life the experience he has acquired in this?' To pretend that that desire ought not to be realized is to admit that God can deceive us. We ought then to recognize that we have lived previous to being what we are, and that several other lives await us. All these lives, to the number of eight hundred and ten, are distributed between five periods and embrace a span of eighty-one thousand years. Allan Hardai reckons that the soul returns to another body after two or three thousand years unless we die a violent death. Then it is quite possible one can be reincarnated after two hundred years."

Adolphe had by this time drawn all around him and became the center of attraction by his entertaining remarks. Theophraste had sat open-eyed, listening intently, and upon hearing the last re-

mark thought "That is well. They may have hung me; so if I did not die that way, they may have got rid of me by some other death more in keeping with my station in life. Nevertheless," he thought, "if all these people here could only realize that they had a prince of the royal blood among them, they would be very much astonished, and be filled with respect. But no, he will still be Theophraste Longuet, manufacturer of rubber stamps."

Champagne was brought, and soon the air rang merrily with general chatter and the explosion of corks. It was then that Marceline turned around to Theophraste and begged him to sing the song which he was accustomed to sing on the anniversary of their marriage. He had sung it the day of their wedding, and on account of its beauty they had adopted it as their wedding song. It was Lissette de Baranger.

However, to the consternation of Marceline and all the guests, instead of singing the song, he rose, threw his napkin on the table and said to her in that strange voice which they heard at the Conciergerie:

"As thou wishest, Marie Antoinette, I can refuse thee nothing."

"Oh, my God," cried Marceline. "Hear what he called me in that strange voice!"

The guests were obviously uncomfortable, and did not know what to make of his peculiar behavior. The song was a vulgar song of the Regency period, and certainly not for such a gathering as was at this party. He sang it with the old French air:

Tou joli belle mimiere—  
Tou joli, moulin.

## CHAPTER V

### *Theophraste Remembers Himself*

THEOPHRASTE sang the song in loud, strident tones, his eyes sparkling, glass in hand. It was with indescribable surprise that the company received it, and despite the richness of the rhyme, the couplet was followed by no applause. An awkward silence followed, and all the ladies looked to Marceline for an explanation.

What was it that Marceline could explain? Adolphe himself looked at Theophraste in surprise; but Theophraste, as if possessed with the devil, continued with the second couplet of the drinking song. When he had finished, he sat down, looked around with satisfaction, and said to Marceline, "What do you think of that, Marie Antoinette?"

In the midst of a death-like silence preserved by all, Marceline asked tremblingly, "Why do you call me Marie Antoinette?"

"Because you are the most beautiful of all!" cried Theophraste. "I appeal to Madame la Marchale de Bouffleurs, who has taste. I appeal to all of you. And there is not one who, by the signet of the Pope, will contradict me, neither the Eros Picards, nor the Bourbons, nor the Burgundias, nor the Provincials, nor the Poet St. Jack, nor Gatelard, nor Bras-de-Fer, nor Guente Noir, not even Bal-a-voir."

M. Theophraste had on his right old Mlle. Tabouret, and he pinched her knee as he looked at Marceline, which nearly made that austere person faint. No one dared to move; for the fiery look of Theophraste frightened the whole company. He leaned amorously towards Mlle. Tabouret, and said to her, staring at Marceline, who was by this time weeping: "Let us see, Mlle. Tabouret, am I not right? To whom can I compare her? Is it La Belle Laitere, or La Petite Minion; or even La Blanche of the bowling alley; or La Belle Helene, who kept the Harp Tavern?"

Turning towards Adolphe, he said with great energy, "Come you, Va-de-Bon Cœur, tell me your opinion. Look at Marie Antoinette a little while. By the fatted calf, she puts them all in the shade: Jeannette, the flower girl of the Royal Palace; Marie Leroy and the female Solomon, the

beauty of the Temple; Jeanne Bonnefoy, who kept the café of the Port Marie; Manon de Versailles, the poultry girl—none of them approach her in beauty.”

He then leapt with one bound upon the table, and breaking the dishes, cups and plates into a thousand pieces, held his glass over his head and shouted, “Let us drink to the Queen of the Nymphs, Marie Antoinette.”

Draining his glass, he smashed it against the table and waved his hand, which was covered with blood. By this time the party had fled in terror, fearing that some tragedy would follow Theophraste’s strange behavior. On superficially thinking of these curious actions one would immediately conclude that he had gone mad or was drunk, but this was not the case. There is another kind of sense beside common sense. It was not because he was crazy or drunk that he could sing a song that he had never learnt, speak a language that he had never heard, or refer to people that he had never read about, who had been dead for centuries. There must have been some other force working in his brain.

Modern scientific experiments have shown with indisputable examples that this particular case was far from unique. Ignorant people, who

neither knew how to read or write, who had never been outside their village, have been known to give most correct answers to the medium who questioned them in a dead language. And this has been before professors of colleges, not before charlatans. It is difficult to explain. It is the mystery of this life, the life hereafter. Some say that it is a learned spirit talking through these ignorant mouths, others have timidly expressed the opinion that such phenomena can only be explained by the remembrance of a former life. Therefore the things which Theophraste said and did without understanding, the Other who relives in him at intervals understands perfectly well, and if we would understand them we must know who this Other is.

As to Theophraste, after the guests had disappeared from the tent, he climbed down from the table. He found it more difficult to reach the floor than it had been to climb upon the table, and he knelt down, taking great precaution not to fall. He then assumed his natural self and called Marceline. She did not answer him, and in searching for her he found her trembling with fright in her room. He closed the door carefully and prepared to give an explanation. She looked at him with her large eyes, amazed, filled with

tears, and he felt it his duty as a husband not to conceal from her any longer this extraordinary phenomenon which had been preoccupying his mind.

The night was ideal, and after they had retired he said to her, "My dear Marceline, you cannot understand what has happened to me this evening, and I can assure you I don't understand myself, but in telling you all I know perhaps we can arrive at some conclusion."

He then related all the details of his visits to the cellars of the Conciergerie. He concealed nothing, and sketched in minute details the extraordinary feelings which had actuated him that evening, and the unknown influence which had commanded him. At first she said nothing, but softly moved away from him as if afraid of him; but when he came to the document which revealed the existence of the treasures, she demanded to see it at once. He judged then that she was taking an interest in the adventure and felt thankful. They got up and he showed her the paper in the light of the full moon, which was streaming into the room. Like all those who had seen it before, she recognized the handwriting immediately, and made the sign of the cross as if fearing some sorcery. Mar-

celine was not a fool, but explained that she could not help making the sign. However, she soon became composed, and began to praise Adolphe, who, in spite of Theophraste's disapproval, had initiated her into the elements of spiritualism, a science she said which would be of some service to Theophraste in his condition. But even in the face of that uncontestable evidence she found it difficult to believe that he was a reincarnated spirit dating back two hundred years, until he asked her who she thought he had been.

Marceline didn't think that he had been a very great personage, and in reply to his disappointed inquiry she said:

"Because this evening you sang in slang, and the ladies whose names you mentioned do not belong to the aristocracy. People who frequented La Terpidere, La Platire, Manon de Versailles, I think are not of much account."

"But I also mentioned the leader of the Bouffleurs," replied Theophraste, "and you know that morals were so dissolute under the Regency of the Duke of Orleans that the fashion at Court was to call the ladies in slighting terms. What do you think of the idea of me being the Bastard of the Regent?"

For sole response she embraced Theophraste in delight, and recollecting his duty on this day of celebration proved to her that if he was more than two hundred years old, his love always remained youthful.

## CHAPTER VI

### *M. Lecamus Expresses His Views.*

AFTER a while Marceline was able to persuade Theophraste to confide in M. Adolphe Lecamus. She declared that Adolphe's great experience, his certain knowledge of the science of metaphysics, ought to be a great help to a man who had buried treasures two hundred years before and wished to find them again. "And," she added, "it is he who will be able to reveal your identity."

He yielded to her persuasions, and in the morning told Adolphe everything. Adolphe was astonished, and it surprised Theophraste that a man who professed Spiritualism should show so much emotion when face to face with a reincarnated spirit. He said that Theophraste's conduct at the dinner table the day before and the words he uttered to him before and since the visit to the Conciergerie were well calculated to prepare him

for such a confidence, but he did not expect such a thing as this. He demanded to see the proof of such a phenomenon. Theophraste readily showed the document, and Adolphe could not deny the authenticity of it. He recognized the handwriting at once, and exclaimed, upon examination, that the handwriting explained many things to him. He had often thought how curiously the characters in Theophraste's handwriting differed from his real character. It had always been difficult for him to associate the handwriting with Theophraste.

"Really," said Theophraste, "what character do you ascribe to me?"

"Well, if you will promise not to bear me any ill, I will tell you!"

On this assurance he painted Theophraste's character. It was that of a kind citizen, an honest merchant, an excellent husband, but a man incapable of showing any firmness, wit or energy. He told him also that his timidity was excessive, and that kindness was always ready to degenerate into weakness. The picture was not at all flattering, and Theophraste felt a little hurt.

"And now," said he, "that you have told me what you think of my character, tell me what you think of my writing."

Then he made observations on his handwriting which would not have failed to make him quite angry if he had not remembered that Signor Petito had said the same. He said:

"Your writing expresses all the contrary sentiments in your nature as I know it, and I can imagine nothing more antithetical than your writing and your real character. Thus you do not write a characteristic hand, but the handwriting of the Other."

Theophraste was deeply interested. He thought of the strength and energy of the Other, he imagined that he was a great captain. However, Adolphe's next remark completely disillusioned him.

"Any sign in those formations, in the pointed fashion they have of reuniting, and in the way of growing tall and of climbing up, and of passing each other, show energy, firmness, obstinacy, ardor, activity, and ambition, but all for evil."

This dismayed him, but he exclaimed with a show of spirit: "Where is the evil? Where is the good? If Attila had known how to write perhaps he would have written like Napoleon."

"They called Attila the scourge of God."

"And Napoleon the scourge of man," replied Theophraste, with difficulty controlling his anger.

How could it be that Theophraste Longuet could have been anything else but an honest being before his birth, during his life, and after his death?

Marceline agreed with him, and Adolphe fearing that he had gone too far made apologies.

## CHAPTER VII

### *Theophraste and His Black Plume*

FOR the next few days M. Lecamus and M. Longuet occupied themselves with evidence of this phenomenon, and were often seen together, conversing mysteriously, in the bar-rooms and about town, about the treason of the first of April. They left the Villa Flots d'Azure to return to Paris, with the intention of searching the libraries. They worked diligently for several days without any result, until M. Longuet began to lose spirit. M. Lecamus was more patient.

One evening as they were walking towards the Rond Point, in the Champs Elysees, he turned around and said, "What can we do to find the approximate place where the treasures are buried if you have not your black plume?" Theophraste and Marceline could not understand this, and asked for an explanation. He commented:

"You have heard of the water witches who could

discover water by the aid of a wand, by a phenomenon which nobody has as yet been able to explain. These witches traced water across the various beds of earth, and by pointing the little rods, indicated where it was necessary to dig in order to make a well. I do not despair of showing you, Theophraste, where your treasures are buried. I will conduct you over the ground shown in the document, and tell you where it is that you must dig to find your treasure."

"Yes," interrupted Theophraste, "but this does not explain to us what you mean by 'the black plume.'"

"I am coming to that now. I am obliged to speak of Darwin. You will understand directly. You know that Darwin devoted himself to several celebrated experiments, of which the best known is that with pigeons.

"Desirous of accounting for the phenomenon of heredity and the value that he attached to it, he closely studied the breeding of pigeons, which is sufficiently rapid to have enabled him to draw conclusions upon an appreciable number of generations. At the end of the tenth generation he found the same type of pigeon, with the same defects, the same qualities, the same form, the same outline, and the same black plume there in the same

place where the first pigeon had a black feather. Very well! With that I will prove to you that it is the same with souls as it is with bodies.

“At the end of the tenth generation, we find the same soul, as far as it exists, with the same defects, the same virtues, and, as it were, with the original black feather. While giving you this illustration, it is necessary to distinguish between the soul which reappears thus hereditarily, and that which comes back by reincarnation. Believing that it is the result of a unique combination which nothing can oppose, and, since it dwells in a case called a body, is hereditary in the same degree as that body, an hereditary soul which comes from an ancestor always has his black feather, while a soul which comes back by reincarnation finds itself in a body which is in no way prepared to receive it. The aggregate materials of this body are original, and decaying, momentarily impose a silence on that soul.

“But a time comes when this soul becomes the strongest, when it speaks, when it shows itself entirely, just as the black feather does.

“Now, Theophraste, for several generations you were the honest gardeners in the Ferte-sous-Jonarre. But when that soul speaks in you, you are no longer yourself. Theophraste Longuet

has disappeared. It is the Other who is there. It is the Other who has the gesture, the manner, the action, the black feather. It is the other who recalls the mystery of the treasure, it is the Other who remembers the Other."

"Oh! This is admirable!" exclaimed Theophraste, who was so deeply moved that he could hardly refrain from weeping with excitement. "And now I understand what you mean by my black feather. My black feather returns to me when I am the Other."

"And he will help you then, my friend," declared Adolphe with conviction. "But until we have released the unknown who is hidden in Theophraste Longuet, and until he lives with sufficient strength, audacity, and liberty, until he is resuscitated, in a word, until he appears to us with his 'black feather,' we will confine ourselves to the study of that interesting document which you brought from the Conciergerie. Let us make a plan for penetrating the mystery. We will find out exactly where the treasures are buried, but we must wait for the spirit who dwells in you to say to us, 'It is there.'"

"My friend," said Marceline, overflowing with admiration, "you talk like a book, and I wonder that you have not more often tried to teach us

these things, for we are so ignorant. You must not leave a stone unturned to find the treasure. I do not fear the destruction of the earth on account of the object of our search."

Adolphe turned around to reprove Marceline for her flippancy, but at this moment M. Milfroid, the Commissioner of Police, approached, and Adolphe rose to greet his friend.

Adolphe introduced M. Milfroid to M. and Mme. Longuet. He was a man of about forty years of age, elegantly dressed, immaculate gloves, a silvery ringlet of hair on the white forehead. He advanced, smiling and bowing.

"We have often heard our friend M. Adolphe speak of you," said Marceline. "Your fame has gone before you."

"Oh, madame, I have known you for a long time. Every time I meet M. Lecamus he speaks to me of his friends of the Rue Gerauds, and in such terms that it has been my greatest desire to have the happiness of being presented to you."

Marceline was conquered by such gallant manners. "I hear that you play the violin very well," she said.

"I am equally interested in philosophy," said M. Milfroid. "An interest which I owe to M. Adolphe, who is continually in dispute with me

over the immortality of the soul, and other psychic matters. He has really made a convert of me."

"Monsieur," said Theophraste, who had not yet taken part in the conversation, "Adolphe and I like to converse about serious matters, also. We were just speaking of the relations between the soul and the body, and the different ways that the soul has of behaving with the body."

"Ah!" said M. Milfroid, who desired to shine before Marceline, "are you able to distinguish between matter and mind, or the material and the spiritual? Matter and mind are the same thing in the eyes of science. That is to say, they constitute alike one unit, one force, produce at one time the phenomenon of cause and effect, tending to one end, the progressive steps of existence. You are the only ones, gentlemen, to still make that old distinction between matter and mind."

After a while they rose and returned through the Place de la Concorde. At the entrance to the Rue Royale, there was a crowd of people, shouting and gesticulating. Theophraste, an old Parisian, wanted to know what was taking place, and flung himself into the crowd.

"Look out for pickpockets," Marceline called to him.

"Oh, madame," said Monsieur Milfroid, the Commissioner of Police, "there are no pickpockets when I am about."

"It is true. We should be in no danger when you are here."

"I do not know about that," said Adolphe, looking about them. "My friend here appears more dangerous to me than all the pickpockets on earth." At this they all laughed.

Theophraste made them wait ten minutes before he appeared, and then he announced that it was a coachman who had gotten his wheels locked with an automobile, and could not separate them.

Marceline felt annoyed at having been kept waiting so long on such a slight pretext. However, her thoughts were diverted in doing the honors of a hostess, and she invited M. Milfroid to dinner.

During the dinner many pleasantries were passed, and M. Milfroid excelled in complimenting Marceline.

Suddenly, he became uneasy, and plunging his hands in his pockets, looked vainly for his handkerchief. After a final and useless search, he passed his forefinger under his moustache, and sighed, declaring that it did not matter.

However, at that moment Theophraste wiped

his mouth, and Marceline asked him where he had found such a beautiful handkerchief. M. Milfroid at once recognized it as his own, and thinking it just a piece of pleasantry, took the handkerchief from Theophraste. However, feeling in his left side, he became pale and exclaimed, "Good God! I have lost my pocketbook. There were five hundred francs in it." M. Milfroid did not regret losing the five hundred francs, but he found himself ridiculed by Adolphe, and Marceline teased him gently and laughed prettily. They were all poking fun at him, and this made him furious.

"M. Milfroid," said Theophraste, "if you need any money for the evening I can lend it to you," and he drew a wallet from his pocket. M. Milfroid uttered a cry: it was his! M. Milfroid took the wallet from him as he had done the handkerchief, and alleging numerous engagements, he took his leave. Before going down the stairs, he said to his friend Adolphe, who followed him, "These are nice kind of people you have introduced me to."

When Adolphe returned to the dining-room, Theophraste was emptying his pockets. On the table there lay three watches, six handkerchiefs, several pocketbooks, containing large sums of money, and eighteen checks.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *An Appeal for Help*

THE important events of this story and its hero have occupied us to such an extent that we have not found time to present Monsieur Lecamus as he should be. The little that we know of him does not effect our sympathy. The place that he occupies in the house of Longuet, which is eminently immoral; the cynicism with which he deceives an innocent soul; the little danger that he seems to run in accomplishing the larceny—these are good reasons why we have deferred showing our contempt for him. It may be said that we have judged hastily, and have not allowed him to plead extenuating circumstances. The principal one, and the one which it would be well for us to dwell upon, is that he really liked Theophraste above everybody else. He loved him with his faults, his weaknesses, his ingenuousness, the confidence he had in him, and above all, the admiration Theophraste had for him. There was no

sacrifice he would not make for Theophraste, and I daresay that if Theophraste had any pecuniary troubles, which after all are the only troubles which really count here below, Adolphe Lecamus would open his purse, and give to him freely. Adolphe loved Theophraste even above Marceline; and although I do not pretend to deal here with psychology, I find myself confronted with a case which is much less common than one would be inclined to believe. For Adolphe loved Marceline because he had made her his mistress.

If he had learned, by some supernatural warning, that Theophraste would some day learn his real position in the household, he would only have respected Marceline. "But," he thought to himself, "Theophraste will never know anything about it, and as unknown evils do not exist, I will be the lover of the wife of my best friend."

These lines are necessary, that the reader may understand properly the knavish tricks of the lover. But we must understand distinctly Adolphe's devotion to Theophraste.

After the departure of the Commissioner, they all set themselves to consider what was to be done with the articles which Theophraste had brought home with him. At first they all sat silently looking at the objects, no one wishing to break the

silence, until Theophraste said, "I have nothing more in my pockets. I really believe I have got my black plume."

Marceline and Adolphe were startled by this, but still did not say anything, and waited for Theophraste to give some explanation. Then he declared it was in the crowd at the Place de la Concorde. He went in and out among the crowd, and it was a very simple matter for him.

"What must we do?" asked Adolphe in a grave voice?"

"What do you wish me to do?" replied Theophraste, who by this time had begun to confess. "You do not think that I am going to keep them! It is not my habit to keep things that do not belong to me. I am an honest man and have never wronged anybody. You must take them all to M. Milfroid, your friend, the Commissioner of Police. He can easily restore them to the owners."

"What can I say to him?"

"Whatever you wish," burst out Theophraste, who was becoming impatient. "Did the honest coachman who found a purse and fifty thousand francs in his carriage think about what he should say when he took them to the commissariat? He simply said, 'I have found them in the carriage.' That was sufficient. They even rewarded him for

it. You must say, 'My friend Longuet charged me to bring this to you. He found them in his pockets, and he does not wish a reward.' "

Marceline touched Adolphe with her foot under the table. This was her customary way of secretly drawing Adolphe's attention. She wanted to signify to him that she thought Theophraste was demented, and her look quite showed it. Adolphe understood. He knitted his brows and scratched the tip of his nose. He felt that now was the time to act. He looked from Theophraste to the pocket-books, and coughing, said, "Theophraste, this is not natural. We have to explain ourselves. We must understand. You must not close your eyes to this misfortune. You must open them wide, and bring your will to fight it."

"Of what misfortune are you speaking?" asked Theophraste, becoming frightened.

"Well, is it not a misfortune to have things in your pocket that do not belong to you?"

"I do not understand. You seem to be accusing me of being dishonest. I am an honest man, and whatever I have done dishonestly, I have done against my will."

Having said these words, he fell back in his chair in a dead faint, and a deep silence fell over them all.

When Theophraste came out of his stupor, his eyes were full of tears. He motioned to his wife and his friend to come nearer to him. When they were beside him, he said, showing pitiable emotion, "I feel that Adolphe is right. A great misfortune menaces me, I know not what! I know not what! My God! I know not what! I know not what!"

Adolphe and Marceline attempted to console him, but he wept more. Then Marceline began to weep.

In his emotion, Theophraste grasped them both by the hand, and cried, "Swear never to abandon me, no matter what happens, for, oh! some day I shall need your help." They swore to him in good faith.

Adolphe then asked to see the document. As he spread the document before him, he said, "Theophraste, tell me, do you ever have dreams?"

"It is very probable, but I only dream a very little."

"Never?" insisted Adolphe.

"Scarcely ever. However, I remember to have dreamed four or five times in my life, perhaps because I woke each time in the middle of my dream, and it was always the same dream. But what pos-

sible interest can there be in this, to the subject which is occupying us now, Adolphe?"

Adolphe continued: "Dreams have never been explained by science. Science attributes them all to the effects of the imagination, but it does not give us the reason for these clear, distinct visions which appear to us sometimes. Thus it explains a thing which is not known by another which is no better understood. It says that dreams are the recollection of things which took place in a former life. But even admitting this solution—which is a doubtful one—we still have to find out what is the magic mirror that serves so well to keep the imprint of things. Moreover, how can one explain visions of real things, events that one has never seen in a former state, and of which one has never even thought? Who can affirm that these are not visions of retrospective past events in a former life?"

"That is right, my dear Adolphe," said Theophraste, "and I ought to confess the things that I have dreamed. I have dreamed them three times as I said before, things that were perhaps true in the past, or will be in the future. I have never seen them in a waking state in my present life."

"You understand me," said Adolphe. "Relate

to me the things that you have dreamed of and have never seen."

"Oh, that will not take long. But so much the better, for it is not very cheerful: I dreamed that I was married to a woman named Marie Antoinette, and then——"

"And then?" interrupted Adolphe, who had never taken his eyes off the document.

"And then I cut her up in pieces."

"Oh, horrors!" cried Marceline.

"It is horrible," continued Theophraste, shaking his head. "Then I put the pieces in a basket and threw them into the Seine by the little bridge of the Hotel Dieu. I awoke then, and you may be sure I was not sorry."

Adolphe struck the table a hard blow with his fist. "It is frightful," he cried in a harsh voice, looking at Theophraste.

"Is it not?" said Marceline, shuddering.

Adolphe read the first lines of the document.

"Oh, how dreadful it is!" he continued, groaning. "Alas, alas! I understand all, now."

"What do you understand?" asked Theophraste in a frightened voice, following Adolphe's finger as he traced the first two lines of the document.

"This," said Adolphe. "'Moi et! I buried my treasures.' And you do not know what that 'et'

means? Well, I won't tell you until I am quite sure. I will know to-morrow. Theophraste, to-morrow at two o'clock be at the Rue Guinegaud and the Rue Mazarin. I am going to take these articles to M. Milfroid's house. He will restore them to their owners, and we will prove to him that there are pickpockets even when the Commissioner is present. Adieu, my friend, adieu. Above all take courage. Take courage." Adolphe shook Theophraste's hand with the warmth of a comrade, and departed.

Theophraste did not sleep that night. While Marceline reposed peacefully by his side, he lay with eyes wide open in the darkness. His respiration was irregular, and he sighed often. Anxiety lay heavy upon him.

## CHAPTER IX

### *The Portrait*

**D**AY broke over the city. A cloudy day, with a mist that enveloped everything in a sinister manner. The sun tried in vain to penetrate that sombre atmosphere.

Mid-day showed a dark red ball, rolling ingloriously in a sulphurous light. Such was the picture of the heavens that day.

Theophraste sprang out of bed early, and awoke Marceline suddenly by an excess of foolish hilarity. Marceline inquired the reason for such strange joyfulness. He said that he could not help laughing at the idea of M. Milfroid, the Commissioner of Police, receiving back the stolen goods which had been pickpocketed right before his very eyes. "My dear Marceline," he said, "it is foolish, the way people carry the money in their pockets. If you cannot put your hand in, slip a straw, filled with glue, in. It is an excellent

scheme for extricating money from people's pockets."

Marceline sat up and gazed at him. She could not understand, as he never looked more natural in his life, and yet he was saying peculiar things, and his words were most unnatural.

"Theophraste, you frighten me," she cried, and in her fear, groaned, "My poor child."

Theophraste grew terribly angry. He threw himself at his wife, and threatened to strike her. "You know perfectly well that I do not wish to be called a child since the death of Jeanneton-Venes. I am no child."

Marceline swore that she would never do it again, and in the depths of her soul regretted the unlucky moment which had given her husband proprietorship of a document which had brought into the household such fears and such follies. She knew neither Marie Antoinette, nor Jeanneton-Venes, although he continually referred to them. He had a familiar way of expressing himself about these women which made her uneasy, and finally the unexpected sentences, spoken by Theophraste, and his actions, made her dread the incomprehensible Theophraste of two hundred years ago. It made her long for the former Theophraste, so kind, so easy to understand. Then she gave her-

self up to bitter reflections upon the theory of reincarnation.

Theophraste finished dressing, and then announcing that he would not breakfast at home, said that he had a rendezvous with his friend Va-de-Bon Cœur, at the corner of the Rue Mazarin and Rue Guinegaud, to do a good turn for M. de Francouse, but as that rendezvous was after breakfast, he intended enjoying the air in the Moulin de Chopinette.

"You will leave my green umbrella here," he said, "and I will take my black feather." Then, putting the final touches to his cravat, he went out. On the landing he met Signor Petito, the Italian professor, who was also going downstairs. Signor Petito bowed very low, complained of the state of the weather, and complimented Theophraste on his appearance.

Theophraste answered in a less amiable tone, as he was not desiring the Signor's company, and he demanded of him if Madame Petito could not be induced to learn another air on the piano than "Carnival de Venice." But Signor Petito replied, smiling, that she was already studying "Love's Destiny," but in future she would study only the pieces which would please M. Longuet. He then asked, "Which way are you going?"

"For a turn in the Moulin de Chopinette; but the weather is too bad, so I will have to go down to the Porcherons."

"To the Porcherons?" Signor Petito was going to ask, but he changed his mind. "Where is the Porcherons?" he asked. "I will go, too."

"Aha, indeed!" said M. Longuet, glancing curiously at Signor Petito. "You too will go to the Porcherons?"

"Go there or somewhere else," said Signor Petito, pleasantly, and he followed Theophraste.

At the end of a short silence Signor Petito ventured to ask, "Where are your treasures, M. Longuet?"

Theophraste faced about suddenly. "What has put such an idea into your head?" he exclaimed.

"Do you not remember the day that you brought the specimen of your handwriting and asked for my opinion?"

"I remember, and you were wrong," said Theophraste drily, as he opened his umbrella.

Signor Petito, in nowise discouraged, placed himself under the shelter of Theophraste's umbrella. "Oh! M. Longuet, I did not say that to annoy you."

They arrived at the corner of the Avenue Tre-daine. Theophraste was in very bad humor.

"Monsieur," he said, "I have an appointment at the tavern of the Veau-qui-telle, by the side of the Chapel Porcherons, here, you see."

"But we are at the Chapel Notre Dame de Lorete, and not the Porcherons, at all."

Theophraste disregarded Petito's remark, and suddenly said to him, "Do you know that there is a price on my head?"

Signor Petito seemed taken aback by this sudden change of tone.

"It will cost them dear, though, to get my head," said Theophraste. "Do you know how much it will cost, Signor, the head of L'Enfant? No? Very well. I am going to tell you, since the occasion has presented itself, and I am going to tell you the whole story, which may be profitable to you."

Then, without any preparation, he related in the most natural way possible, his existence previous to his present one.

"My head is worth 20,000 pounds," said he, "and you know it very well." And as he pronounced these words he struck the table such a blow that Signor Petito recoiled instinctively.

"Here is the history of it all. I was walking, two hundred years ago, in the Rue de Vauregard, with my hands in my pocket, without arms, with-

out even a sword, with the most honest intentions in the world, when a man met me. He bowed almost to the ground, and told me that my face reminded him so much of some one he knew. He was called 'Old Man Bidel,' or 'Bidel the Good-natured,' and he said that he had a secret to confide to me.

I encouraged him by a friendly tap on the shoulder, and he confided his secret to me. He whispered in my ear that the Regent had promised twenty thousand pounds to whoever would arrest the *Enfant*, and he knew where the *Enfant* was hiding. That I looked to him like a man of courage, and that he, with my aid, would do anything to get the 20,000 pounds. He said that he would divide the reward.

"The old man Bidel was on the wrong track, Signor Petito, for I also knew where to find L'*Enfant*, seeing that I was that person."

Signor Petito did not wish to believe any of this, as he could see for himself that M. Longuet had been out of infancy a good many years. However, he dared not say anything. Theophraste continued, "I replied to the old man Bidel, that it was a happy chance and that I thanked Heaven for putting him in my path, and I made him conduct me to the place where he could find the *En-*

fant. He said to me, 'To-night, the *Enfant* sleeps at the Capucine, in the Tavern Suite, which bears as a sign the Cross of the St. Hester.'

"It was true, Signor Petito, the old man Bidel was very well informed. I congratulated him, and we passed just then a cutlery shop, and I bought a small knife, much to the astonishment of Bidel, who asked me what I planned to do with such a weapon. I replied to him that with a small knife like this one could kill a fly, and I plunged it into his heart. He sank down, raised his arms wildly for a few moments, and died."

Signor Petito, who at first had moved away from Theophraste, now rose and ran to the door, and was glad to get out of sight.

M. Longuet drank his wine, got up and went to the Bousset Brewery, where Mme. Barth was standing, making up her books. He said to her, "Mme. Taconet——"

Mme. Barth demanded why he called her Mme. Taconet, but he disregarded her question, and continued, "If Signor Petito comes here again, you will tell him for me that the first time I find him in my way, I will cut his ears off." Saying this, Theophraste fondled the handle of his umbrella as one grasps the handle of a dagger.

There was no doubt about it, he had his black plume. He had become the Other entirely.

The fog was still thick and he did not think of breakfasting yet. He walked into the sulphurous mist like one in a dream. He crossed the whole of the Quarter of Antin, and that which was formerly the Avenue L'Enrique, until he came under the shadows of the towers of Trinity, which he called the Chateau du Coq. On his arrival at the St. Lazare, he believed that he was at the Petite Pologne.

But little by little the fog cleared away, and his dream disappeared with it. He had the most exact idea of things when he crossed the Point Royale, and by the time he had set foot on the left bank, he was again the honest Theophraste, and had only the vaguest idea of that which had happened on the right bank. But he could remember this, and when he questioned himself thoroughly, he began to experience the different conditions or states of the soul. He discovered in himself three distinct states. First, that which resulted from his life as an actuality, the honest merchant; second, that which resulted from the sudden and momentary resurrection of the Other; and third, that which resulted from memory. The recollection was to him like a third Theophraste, who re-

lated to the first what he had known of the second. This resurrection of Theophraste's was a terrible thing.

On crossing the Bridge he hurried beyond the Rue Guinegaud. He did not care to pass by the corner of the Rue Mazarin, he knew not why. He turned the corner by the Hotel Monniare, and almost ran into Adolphe, who was waiting for him there.

"Have you ever heard of a person called L'Enfant, my dear Adolphe?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, yes," said Adolphe, "I have heard of him. I even know his real name, his family name."

"Ah, what is it?" anxiously inquired Theophraste.

Adolphe for reply pushed Theophraste into the hallway of an old house, in the Rue Guinegard, a few steps from the Hotel de la Monniare. They climbed a tottering staircase, and entered a room in which the curtains were drawn. Somebody had spent the night in the room.

On a little table in the corner, the trembling flame of a wax candle lit up a portrait. It was the picture of a man about thirty years of age. He had a robust figure, high forehead, strong nose, a smooth chin, and large mouth and mous-

tache. His thick hair was covered by a coarse woolen cap, and he wore a coat over a coarse linen shirt, which appeared to be a prison garb.

"Wait," said Theophraste, without raising his tone, "how is it that my portrait is in this house?"

"Your picture?" asked Adolphe. "Are you sure?"

"Who could be more sure of it than I?" said Theophraste again, without being excited.

"Very well," said M. Lecamus, with emotions that it would be hard to describe. "That portrait, which is your portrait, is the portrait of Cartouche." When M. Lecamus turned to see the effect his words would produce on his friend, he saw Theophraste stretched on the floor in a dead swoon.

For a long time he worked to bring him to. He blew out the candle and opened the windows, allowing the good air to come in. Theophraste came to himself, and his first words were, "Adolphe, above all things do not speak of this to my wife."

## CHAPTER X

### *Cartouche's Past*

THE following day Theophraste and Marceline returned to the quiet life of the Villa Flots-d'Azure. Theophraste had not mentioned a word of the discovery, and his wife refrained from questioning him. Marceline knew nothing yet of the terrible discovery. Theophraste's face was full of consternation, and it was evident to Marceline that he had terrible things on his mind.

Adolphe was to join them in a few days; two days passed very quietly in the villa. Marceline attended to her household duties, and Theophraste silently prepared his fishing tackle, as he had promised Adolphe a few days' fishing in the Marne. On the third day, Theophraste, who had passed a good night, showed a less agitated countenance, and began to smile and was cheered at the prospect of Adolphe's coming. M. Lecamus arrived before noon, and they both received him with delight.

Taking their places at lunch their conversation turned on angling, but nothing was said of the mysterious proceedings of the week before. After lunch they prepared for their fishing expedition; Theophraste took care of the lines, the rods and the bait, and Adolphe took the nets.

Going down to the water's edge, Theophraste turned to Adolphe and said, "Tell me, have you any news? While we are fishing I will listen to you. I have prepared a lot of sport, but I don't think we will do very much to-day, if you have important news for me."

Adolphe replied, "There is some good, and some bad news. But I must tell you that there is more bad than good. No doubt many stories have been invented about you, but the real truth is not entirely pleasant."

"Are you well informed, and is your information authentic?"

"I have been to the very fountain-head, I have seen the authentic documents. I am going to tell you what I know. If I am mistaken, correct me."

Theophraste threw his half-prepared bait into the water, and said, "Go on. I must have a full explanation."

"First," said Adolphe, "you were born in the

month of October, 1693. You were called Louis Dominique Cartouche."

"But it is needless to call me Cartouche, no one need know that. Call me L'Enfant. I like it much better and no one will understand."

"Yes," insisted Adolphe, "but you know that your name is Cartouche. It is not an assumed name. It is said that you studied hard in Clermont College. That you were the schoolfellow of Voltaire, and there is a legend that while you learned to read, in the course of time, thanks to the gypsies who taught you reading, you were never able to write."

"Well, that's funny," cried Theophraste, "for if I never learned to write, how could I have drawn up the document in the dungeon of the Conciergerie?"

"At the time of your trial, you declared that you did not know how to write. You signed your depositions with a cross and you have never written a line to show who it was."

"But," Theophraste said, "it was never necessary to write. In my position I should have dreaded to compromise myself. But the document is there."

"Evidently. Let us return to your eleventh year. One day you were in the Saint Laurent

Faire, with some comrades, when you fell in with a band of gypsies. The gypsies carried you away. They stole you. They taught you the play of the cudgel, the sword, to shoot a pistol, to jump, and to rob the pockets of the bourgeoisie without being discovered. At your twelfth year you were an adept at this, and without an equal for bringing back handkerchiefs, snuff boxes, and watches. The band of gypsies found themselves at Rouen, when little Louis Dominique fell ill. He was taken to a hospital in Rouen, and it was there that an uncle discovered him. He recognized him, and swore to restore him to his parents."

Here Theophraste interrupted with a word as to his uncle, and Lecamus becoming impatient, begged him to cease his continual interruptions, declaring it would take some time to tell the story of Cartouche if he would not listen to it silently.

"I would like to see you in my place," said Theophraste.

Adolphe continued: "In a while Cartouche became the chief of a band of brigands. He commanded about three thousand men, had more than fifty lieutenants; it was their habit to dress exactly alike, in cinnamon-colored coats, and doublets of silk and amaranthine, showing a piece of black taffeta underneath the left eye. They

brought against him more than one hundred and fifty personal assassinations, and put a price upon his head. He was tried and broken on the wheel."

"Upon hearing this Theophraste showed evident signs of alarm. He dropped his fishing tackle, losing it in the swift current of the river. He could not give his mind to fishing any more that day, and so they resolved to give up the attempt. They did not wait for sundown, to return to the Villa Flots-d'Azure. Swinging their meagre spoils lightly in their nets they sadly retraced their steps. Cartouche filled their minds, and their return journey was occupied in thoughts of this dual personality.

## CHAPTER XI

### *Signor Petito Appears*

WHILE waiting for the stage from Crecy to stop for them, they called at the wayside inn, and had some refreshment, while Adolphe took up the story of L'Enfant at the point where he had left off.

"That good uncle," said he, "had fellow-feeling for one of his family, and he rescued young Cartouche from his miserable lot and made him return to his parents. His father was a cooper by trade, and young Louis, having profited by his youthful misfortunes, swore that henceforth he would be a good son and a diligent apprentice. He helped his father to make casks, working from day-break to sunset.

"He was frequently seen, during lunch hour, amusing his companions with pretty tricks of sleight-of-hand which he had learned during the few months he had been with the gypsies. He had

become so adept at this science that on special occasions little Louis and his family were invited to dinners and suppers before friends, for they looked forward to the enjoyment of these tricks of Louis', and he became a great success in the quarter, and he, on his part, was proud of his growing renown.

"In the meantime he had attained that happy period where the least sensitive of human beings feel the beating of their hearts awaken to the most tender sentiments. Louis Dominique was in love. The object of his affections was a charming needlewoman of the Rue Porte Foin, coquettish, with blue eyes, golden hair, and a fine figure. I have said that this needlewoman was a coquette. She loved dress, jewels and laces, and it was her desire always to be better clothed than her companions. The modest income of Louis Dominique did not permit of his paying for the extravagant fancies of his poor seamstress, and so Cartouche stole from his father. The latter soon found out and took steps by which he could have his boy placed in the Convent of the Lazaretto, in the Faubourg St. Denis."

"Ah," said Theophraste, "instead of combating with kindness the wickedness of this child, they drive him to despair by incarcerating him where he only meets with bad examples, and where the feel-

ing of revolt increases, and boils over, stifling all other feelings in his inexperienced mind. I wager that if they had not put Louis in the House of Correction, that all the trouble would never have happened."

"Reassure yourself," said Adolphe. "Cartouche was never shut up in the Convent of the Lazaretto, for while his father had discovered this crime of Louis', he did not tell him of it; but one Sunday morning, he asked his son to take a walk with him. Dominique readily acquiesced, and they were soon seen walking down the street together.

"'Where are we going, father?' asked Louis. 'No matter where. By way of the Faubourg St. Denis.' Louis pricked up his ears. He knew that at the end of the Faubourg St. Denis was the Lazaretto, and he also knew that sometimes fathers escorted their boys to the Lazaretto.

"He at once felt suspicious, for his conscience was not altogether tranquil, and when they arrived at the corner of the Faubourg St. Denis, and the battlement of the St. Lazaretto rose before them, it seemed to him that his father looked unnatural, and he felt uncomfortable at once. He told his father to continue his walk, slowly, without hurrying, as he wished to stop at the corner.

When his father returned, the son had disappeared, and he never saw him again."

About this time the coach had arrived, and Adolphe discontinued his tale while they mounted to the top. Theophraste recognized M. Bache, and Mme. Froude, and he at once bowed to them, but they did not respond. He called them by name, but they remained mute. Theophraste could not understand this, and turned to ask Adolphe what he thought of it, and why they did not recognize him.

"That does not astonish me at all," said Adolphe. "It is no wonder to me, since the dinner the other day, that nobody bows to you. Your extraordinary behavior was enough to upset them all. Do you not remember how you were mounted on the table and sang that vulgar song? There were some young ladies present, Mles. Froude and Tabouret."

"Ah," said Theophraste, "that accounts for Mme. Bache's pretending not to see me the other day in Paris, when she called at the Pharmacy Crecy and I happened to meet her there. Never mind, Adolphe, continue where you left off about my father. What happened to him?"

"Well, you forgot about your seamstress at the Rue Point Foin, and you thought of her no more.

She worried over your disappearance about a fortnight, and then got somebody else, as is done under similar circumstances to-day. The necessity to make your way in the world recalled your old talents, and soon you were robbing passers-by of the things in their pockets. You operated so adroitly, that you incurred the admiration of a great sharper, who having seen you work, stopped you at the corner of the Rue Gallaud, and demanded of you your money or your life. 'You shall have my purse only when you have my life,' said you to him, and you drew your sword, a small sword that you had taken the day before from a French Guardsman. The great sharper flattered you upon your courage, and then upon your dexterity, and he begged you to accompany him home to the Rue Bout du Monde. He told you on the way that he sought an associate, and you could do the business. He also told you that he had a wife, and the wife had a very pretty sister. After a while you married this sister, though neither notary nor priest was sent for. The attachment did not last over six months, because the sharper, his wife, and his sister-in-law were sent to the gallows. You had already left them by this time, and had joined the army. You were caught one day, drunk, by a recruiting

officer, and he took you to the barracks, and made you sign on."

By this time it was seven o'clock, and Adolphe interrupted the course of his recital at that point, as they had to alight from the coach.

"Tell me," said Theophraste, "I am curious to know how I was built. Was I a handsome man, a tall man?"

"They represent you thus at the theater, in M. d'Ennury's play, but on the contrary, according to the poet Granvel, you were a conceited man, and always fond of singing your own praises. You were dark, lean, small, but of great courage. You were enterprising and bold, and very alert."

"You have not told me," said Theophraste, "how you got that picture in the house on the Rue Guinegaud."

"It is a copy of a photograph by Nedar. He photographed a wax mask, which ought to resemble you, as that mask was made from your face by the order of the Regent. Nedar photographed that mask in 1859. The mask was found in the Chateau de St. Germain."

"Oh! I want to see it," cried Theophraste—"to touch it. We must go to St. Germain to-morrow."

By this time they had reached the house, and

Marceline, in neat dishabille, smilingly opened the door and greeted them.

Theophraste had a great desire to see and touch that waxen mask that had been made from his face, and the desire was still greater when Adolphe entered into the details of it. He told him that it had been in the Chateau de St. Germain en Laye, since the 24th of April, 1849.

"It appears that the portrait was given by an abbot, one Viallier, to be inherited by one Richot, an old officer of the Hussars of King Louis XVI. M. Richot died at St. Germain. He owned the portrait for many years, one most precious, especially as it had belonged to the royal family. The wax mask was moulded by a Florentine artist some days before Cartouche's punishment. The head-dress was a woolen or coarse felt cap, his clothing was a shirt of very coarse linen, a waistcoat, and another vest, and a doublet of black camelot. But the most remarkable thing of all was that Cartouche's hair was cut off of his corpse and pasted on the waxen mask. The whole was shut up in a gilded wooden chest, large and deep, of beautiful workmanship. A Venetian glass protected the portrait, and one could still see the escutcheon of the arms of France on the chest."

Theophraste asked Adolphe where he had found

such precise details, and was told that they were the result of two days' searching in the forgotten archives of the most noted libraries and museums of Paris. There he found his hair, his moustache, and his clothes, two hundred years old.

In spite of the horror which these relics of a man so monstrous ought to have inspired in him, Theophraste could not control his impatience to see them, to touch them. Here was Theophraste Longuet, whose name was synonymous with honor, who had always feared the shedding of blood, cherishing in his heart the coarse remains of the greatest brigand on earth. When he had again command of his senses, he did not find in the bottom of his soul a feeling of absolute despair, but of great pity, a pity so keenly felt that he did not weep only for himself, Theophraste, but also moved him to pity Cartouche. He asked himself which was the more dominant, honest Theophraste, carrying with him the brigand Cartouche, or the brigand Cartouche, shut up within honest Theophraste. "It is necessary that we should understand each other," he said aloud. He felt that he should not have uttered that sentence which must have seemed odd, but which expressed so well the double and yet unique preoccupation of his soul that he could not restrain himself. A great

light dawned upon him at the same time, that recalled the theory of reincarnation that had been explained to him by M. Lecamus. He connected reincarnation with the natural evolution of things, and of individuals, that which was no other than transformation. "Does it not point to the fact that souls reincarnate themselves in order to pass according to natural law to advancement to a better state? It is the progressive step of being. Well, the natural law which certain persons call God, did not find anything better on the earth than the body of Theophraste Longuet through which to make the criminal soul of Cartouche evolve to a better state."

When that idea got a firm hold on him, in place of the deepest despair, which had led him to faint, he found himself prompted by a sentiment almost akin to pride. He was entrusted with the destiny of the world. He, the humble but honest Theophraste, entrusted with the regeneration in ideal splendor, of the soul of shadows and of the bloody Louis Dominique Cartouche, called L'Enfant. He accepted this unexpected task willingly, since he could not do otherwise, and he put himself at once on his guard. Instead of saying, "It is necessary for us to understand each other," he immediately ordered Cartouche to obey Theophraste, and he

promised himself to lead him a life so hard that he could not say without smiling, "Poor Cartouche." He had charged M. Lecamus to write everything possible about Louis Dominique Cartouche in such a way that he could not be ignorant of anything that could be known of his life. With that and with what his black feather and his memory had taught him, he justly thought he could resist in spirit the Other One, which would allow him to act accordingly. He partly confided his reflections to Adolphe, who approved of them, but warned him against a tendency he had to separate Theophraste from Cartouche.

"You must not forget," said he, "that they are one. You have the instincts of the gardeners of the Ferte-sous-Jonarre. Those instincts are good, but you have the soul of Cartouche, which is detestable. Take care. You are his declared enemy. the question is raised as to who will vanquish—the soul of former years, or the instincts of to-day."

Theophraste asked Adolphe if the soul of Cartouche was really altogether detestable, and was happy to learn that it had some good points. Adolphe said that Cartouche had expressly forbidden to kill or even wound passers-by without cause. When he operated in Paris with some of his

bands, and they brought victims to him, he spoke to them with so much politeness and kindness, that they always returned a part of the booty to him. Sometimes they would limit matters to a simple exchange of clothes. When he found letters or pictures in the pockets of the coats thus exchanged, he ran after the ex-proprietors to return them. It was a maxim of that extraordinary individual, that a man ought not to be robbed twice in the same night, nor were they to be too severely treated, so as not to prevent the Parisians from going out in the evening. Therefore he ordered his men to take the utmost care not to kill any one without good reason. At this time the man was not yet thoroughly wicked. Up to then he had always had a reason for every act. It is to be regretted, however, that he had had one hundred and fifty reasons to assassinate.

Let us return to the wax mask.

Theophraste and Adolphe were going down the stairs in the station of St. Germain-en-Laye, when suddenly Theophraste thought he saw a familiar figure ahead of him, among a group of travelers. Moved by a feeling over which he had no control, he ran rapidly towards the group, but the figure had disappeared. Where had he seen that figure before? It was so repulsive to him. Adolphe

asked him the cause of his agitation, and he recovered himself at once.

"I would swear," said Theophraste, "that it was Signor Petito, the Italian professor of the floor below. What did Signor Petito come to St. Germain for? I do not want to run foul of him."

"Well, what has he done, then?" asked Adolphe.

"Oh, nothing. Only if he runs across my way, I swear I will cut off his ears, and you know I will do it if I say so."

They then went, without any more thought of Signor Petito, to the castle. They entered the Museum, and asked to see the wax mask of Cartouche. Theophraste became enraged when he learned that it was not to be found there, and in his excitement he poked the handle of his green umbrella into the eye of a plaster cast of a member of the Legion of Honor. An old guard came up and told him that he knew well there had been a wax mask of Cartouche in St. Germain, and that it could be found, he thought, in the library. But the latter had been closed up for eight days for repairs. Theophraste gave that man a franc, and they turned their steps toward the terrace, promising themselves to come again at a later time, for the farther the wax mask seemed away, the more Theophraste burned to touch it.

It was a beautiful day, and they walked together in the forest, in the magnificent walk which led to the battlements of the Loge, which were constructed in front of the Castle Germain, by Queen Anne of Austria.

As they reached the south angle of the ramparts, it seemed that Theophraste recognized again, gliding in a thicket, the repulsive form of Signor Petito.

Adolphe insisted that he was mistaken.

## CHAPTER XII

### *Theophraste's Memory Is Refreshed*

THEY wandered down to the lawns at the foot of the ramparts, and walking across the green grass, they stopped at the foot of a forked tree. They were seated chatting for some time, when suddenly Theophraste's face seemed to light up as if he recalled something. It seemed as if his memory had suddenly become awakened to events of years ago. His whole soul was filled with sweet memories, like the tenderest recollections of youthful days returning, after having been forgotten for a long time. In his mind he saw perfectly the spirit of Cartouche, as if he had never been separated from him by two hundred years. It seemed to come suddenly to him, and as the events came back to him, he related them to Adolphe, in the following words:

“Adolphe, my friend, I must tell you that at that time my fortune was complete. I was dreaded

and yet liked by all. I was even liked by my victims. I despoiled them so gallantly that they went their way along through the city singing my praises. I had not yet been attacked by that wonderful sanguinary instinct which some months later made me commit the most atrocious crimes. Everything prospered with me; everybody feared me and loved me. I was happy, merry, of a magnificent audacity, gallant in love, and the ruler of Paris. They said that I was the greatest of all robbers; that was only half true, because it was imperative that I should partake of the sovereignty with M. Law, the Controller-General of Finance. My glory was at its zenith; for often he and his people paid me tribute. But he imagined he might excite the Regent against me. One evening when I had stolen into his room in his hotel, disguised as a lackey to Lord Dermott, the Regent sent for Monsieur d'Argenson, keeper of the seals, and told him that he had eight hours in which to arrest me. M. d'Argenson promised everything he wanted, provided they let him go by the way of the Convent of the Madeline du Frainel, where his mistress, Mlle. Husson, had taken refuge. Eight hours later, M. d'Argenson was still at the Convent with Mlle. Husson. As for me, my dear Adolphe, during that time, I attended

to my small affairs, and I commanded without any trouble three thousand men. It was the month of September, the nights were beautiful and clear, and we profited by this to get into the house of the Spanish Ambassador, who lived in the old hotel of the Marshal d'Aucre, in the Rue de Fournon, the same house even which has since been occupied by the Guard de Paris. We entered his wife's bedroom and took possession of all her dresses, of a buckle ornament with twenty-seven large diamonds, a necklace of very fine pearls, six plates, six table sets, six knives and ten coral goblets. We rolled it all up in a table cloth, and went to supper at the house of the Belle Helene, who kept what you called the Inn of the Harp in the Rue de la Harp.

"Oh, Adolphe, what a wonderful thing memory is! Truly I do not know why I said that *you* called it the Inn of the Harp, unless in my mind you are representing a friend whom I had, who was as good as you, and whom I loved as well as you, whose name was Va-de-Bon Cœur. By the Thunder of the Breast, but he was a handsome young fellow! He was a sergeant of the French Guards, and he was my lieutenant. I must tell you, my dear Adolphe, that I commanded a considerable number of French Guardsmen. At the time of my

arrest, one hundred and fifty non-commissioned officers, soldiers of the French Guard, hid themselves, and disappeared over to the colonies. They dreaded lest I should compromise them. They were wrong, however, for torture could not make me speak. However, let me leave those melancholy moments, and come back to the beautiful September nights. We will proceed to the time when it was customary for the Parisians to take up their new abodes. The Regent showed still more anger against me and M. d'Argenson, when he learned about the escapade against the Spanish Ambassador. Imagine his fury as I turned my attentions to him. Va-de-Bon Cœur, being on guard at the Palais Royal, carried off two vermilion flambeaux, which the Duke of Orleans prized very highly. The Regent was so afraid of being robbed that instead of wearing silver-faced buckles and sword handles, he resolved to substitute carved steel. On the first day that he carried one of that kind, I, Cartouche, stole it from him as he was leaving the opera house. The next day I sent it back to him in pieces, and I taunted him about his apparent avarice, and upbraided him, that he, the greatest man in France, should wish to deprive his unfortunate confrères, the silversmiths, of a livelihood.

"He answered me publicly by proclaiming that he was very anxious to know me, and that he would give from his own pocket 20,000 pounds to whoever would bring Cartouche to him. The next day, as he walked to Saint Germain and was breakfasting in the castle, he found under his napkin a message of which you will readily see the sense: 'My lord, you can see me for nothing. It may be to-night, at midnight, behind the Anne of Austria Wall in the forest, where Cartouche will expect you. You are brave. Come alone. If you come accompanied, you run the danger of death.'

"At midnight, I awaited the Regent; twelve o'clock was still sounding in the Loges, when the Regent appeared. The moonlight made the forest seem like fairyland—enchanted, such as one sees at the theater. The forest, a marvelous, transparent blue, seemed bereft of all its branches, of all its foliage, of all its thickets.

"'Behold me, Cartouche,' said the prince; 'I come to you armed with my sword alone, as you have wished. I run perhaps the greatest danger,' he said in a clear, derisive voice, 'but who would not risk everything to see at close range at midnight, in the heart of the forest, the form of Cartouche, when it costs nothing?' Oh, Adolphe, my friend, that thou couldst have been there to hear

me respond to the Regent of France! To be sure, I am only the son of a poor cooper of the Rue du Pontaux-Choux, but what Condé, what Montmorency could have bowed with more grace, sweeping the wet grass with the plume of his hat? The Duke de Richelieu himself could not kneel more elegantly than I did, nor present in a more gracious manner to my lord the purse that I had taken from his pocket. 'I am,' said I, 'the most humble servant of my lord, and I beg him to take back from Cartouche this purse that I had the audacity to steal with so much coolness, only to prove to my lord that his highness finds himself face to face with Cartouche.' The Regent begged me to preserve that purse for a remembrance of him. He was wrong to relate, in the course of time, this anecdote; for the report was spread that he was one of my band. I believe that he had started to go away, when he put his arm in mine and dragged me as far to the right as we are sitting to-day.

"Then the regent did me the honor to put his arm in mine, and I saw that he had something of a secret nature to confide to me. He did not wait to acknowledge that he counted upon my ingenuity to avenge him for an offense that Monsieur the Controller-General had committed against him. He told me that he was quite in love with the

courtesan, Emily; that she was his mistress, and had been for fifteen days, and that he had learned from La Fillon that M. Law had the promise of her favors the next night against the present that he would make her of a ten-thousand-louis necklace. He was sure of it, for La Fillon was never mistaken. Was it not from her that he had had a hint of the Cellamore conspiracy? All the rogues of Paris knew La Fillon.

“La Fillon is a woman of five feet ten inches, who was admirably formed, a ravishingly beautiful face. From the age of fifteen years, that model beauty thought that Nature had not provided such rare treasures to be hidden, so she lavished them. The Duke d’Orleans, a long time before the regency, loved her. He remained smitten with her for more than a year. It was for her that he had constructed, in a retired part of the gardens of Saint Germain, a sort of grotto, lighted mysteriously by several rays directed upon a bed of mats, upon which his mistress stretched herself, clothed in her blonde hair only. He showed them to all who passed that way, and in that way he made numerous friends. But the fifteen years of La Fillon flew away in happy days. Now she had no longer the enjoyment of intrigue, of which she has made two parts—gallantry and

observation. So she furnished some important information to the police and to M. d'Argenson, guard of the seals, and some remarkable subjects for the amours of the Regent. It was she who procured Emily for him, who is by far the prettiest girl in Paris. Everybody wanted to steal her from him. Law, who was the richest, swore to succeed there. The bargain was concluded for the next night.

“‘Cartouche,’ the Regent said to me, after having explained his small affairs to me, ‘thou art a brave man. I give thee the necklace.’

“And he went away in the moonlight, giving me a slight wave of the hand. This kind of mission that I received—to thwart the loves of the Superintendent, and avenge those of the Duke of Orleans, filled me with pride.

“Being back in Paris, I learned near the morning, through my police (which was the best information of the epoch), that the courtesan Emily lived at a small hotel in the Mardis, at the corner of the Rue Barbette and of the Trois-Pavillons, and that the Regent showed more attachment for her than he had ever for the Duchess of Berry, with whom he was disgusted long since for La Baratere, who shut herself up in the Convent of Chelles, less on account of her love for God than

for her liking for the beautiful nuns (what morals, my dear Adolphe, what morals!), and it consoled her that she had recently been mistaken for Mlle. de Valois, uniquely occupied with the Duke de Richelieu. This courtesan, Emily, was no more than an opera girl, but her beauty, as I have told you, surpassed all that one can imagine—I was not long in judging for myself.

“Twenty-four hours after the interview of Saint Germain, that is to say the midnight following, I went out with a placard describing exactly the angle of the Rue des Trois-Pavillons and the Rue Barbette. I had, as if by chance, a pistol in each hand, which made it impossible for me to decently bow to Mlle. Emily, who appeared, considering the hour, in the most polite dishabille, with the Superintendent, who presented a casket to her in which there shone the gems of a necklace, which was valued at the least at ten thousand louis. I excused myself for the necessity of keeping my hat on my head, and begged Monsieur, the Superintendent, seeing the encumbrance of my hands, to close the casket on the necklace, and to put the whole thing in the pocket of my cinnamon coat, promising my gratitude or recognition for this slight service.

“As he hesitated, I proceeded with my presenta-

tion, and when he knew that my name was Cartouche, he obeyed with alacrity.

"I begged Mlle. Emily to reassure herself, declaring that she was in no danger, of which she was convinced, for she began to laugh heartily at the discomfiture of M. Law. I laughed also. I said to M. Law that his necklace was worth 10,000 louis, but if he wished to send the next day, towards five o'clock in the afternoon, a confidence man to the corner of the Rue Vaugirard and of the Rue des Fosses—Monsieur le Prince, with five thousand louis, they would return the collar, on the word of honor of Cartouche. He replied to me that the bargain was concluded and we took leave of each other.

"Two days later some one related the adventure to the Regent, who was at first overjoyed, but whose face changed when he learned the culmination of the event. The man, Law, had given the five thousand louis as was arranged, to the man, Cartouche, and he expected the jewel box, when the other told him that Cartouche had already gone to carry it himself to Mlle. Emily. Law ran to the house of the courtesan, saw the necklace and demanded the price.

"‘It is already received,’ replied Emily, turning her back on him.

“‘And by whom?’ exclaimed M. le Superintendent.

“‘Evidently by the one who brought me the necklace—by Cartouche, who has just left here. Should I not pay upon receipt of the necklace? And immediately? I have no credit, myself,’ added she, shouting over the discomfited face of the man of the Rue Quincamprix.

“At the Palais Royal, my dear Adolphe, the jest had the success that you can imagine. It did not matter, the Regent had found out that I had surpassed his instructions, and in his anger he again sent M. d’Argenson to hunt for me. He, however, was again diverted by the attractions of Mlle. Husson. It was a fact, my dear Adolphe, that women were a source of great help to me, and I leaned towards them considerably. But they contributed much to my ruin, also. Knowing of the propriety of my manners, and of my exclusive love for Marceline, you must think how two hundred years changes a man.”

Elated at his narrative, Adolphe laughed at the pleasantry which terminated it. “How two hundred years changes a man!” M. Longuet laughed at it. The supernatural and terrifying antithesis between Cartouche and Longuet, which had plunged him at first into the most melancholy

fright, now incited him to make jests. His excuse was that he did not see anything to fear. He only found his case a little odd. He joked about it with Adolphe, and even resolved to no longer keep his true personality from Marceline. She was intelligent and would understand. He imagined that this personality would present dangers to himself and to society, but, behold! it existed no longer in the real condition, but only in his memory, as a vivid picture. He would not have to control Cartouche as he had dreaded; he would only have to ask him from time to time, some anecdote, which would help M. Longuet in conversation. The history of the Regent, M. Law, and of the courtesan, were sure proofs of that condition of the soul. How it had glided from his memory without effort! What evil, then, was there in that? After all, if he had been Cartouche, it was not his fault, and it would be very foolish in him to be angry about it. He even joked about the fortune.

At midnight they made their way back to Paris. As they arrived at the station St. Lazare, M. Lecamus asked him the following question:

“My friend, when you are Cartouche, and you take your walks in Paris, and you see the life of Paris, what astonishes you most? Is it the tele-

phone, or the railway, or the Mitro, or the Eiffel Tower?"

Theophraste replied, "No, no. That which astonishes me most when I am Cartouche is the police force."

## CHAPTER XIII

### *The Cat*

**I**T seems that the destiny which controls the lives of men, takes a diabolical pleasure in preceding the worst catastrophe by the serenest of joys. Thus is it often that we are warned of the tempest by the calm.

Thus in the beginning of the misfortunes of Theophraste, Marceline and Adolphe, there was something which was not of very great importance in itself—the strange behavior of a small black cat.

I have not yet described in detail the apartment occupied by the household of Longuet in the Rue Geronde. It is now necessary to do so. It was a small apartment, rented for twelve hundred francs a year, on passing through the folding-doors of which one entered a vestibule of restricted dimensions, all the furniture of which consisted of a polished oak trunk, which seemed to fill the whole

vestibule. Besides the front door, four doors opened into the vestibule: the kitchen door, the dining-room door, to the left; the parlor door, and that of the bedroom, on the right. The parlor and bedroom windows looked out into the street, and those of the kitchen and dining-room looked out into the court. The window of the little room in which M. Longuet had made his office, opened on the street also. This room was between the bedroom and the dining-room, and could be entered by doors from either of these. As to the furniture in this apartment, that in the office is all that need be described. There was a small desk against the wall.

These great misfortunes of Theophraste, Marceline and Adolphe centered around something which was not of great importance in itself: it was only an ornament in the form of a small black cat, which was placed over the patent lock with which the small desk was fastened, thus hiding it.

This little black cat was nothing more than an ingenious silken cushion, which served the double purpose of pin-cushion and pen-wiper. There was also a tea-table in this room.

Upon returning from their trip, Adolphe accompanied Theophraste up the stairway, and as it was late he announced his intention of leaving at

once. He ordered his friend to go to bed so that he might get up early the next day to make further researches. He shook his hand with a show of sincerity, and as he went downstairs, looked up to Theophraste, who was holding the lamp for him, and murmured, "Good-bye, till to-morrow."

Theophraste closed the door of the apartment with the greatest care, and as he made the second turn to the latch, he said to Marceline, "Now that we are very often in the country, we ought to have extra bolts for safety."

Theophraste and Marceline searched the apartment before going to bed. They went into the kitchen, into the dining-room, into the parlor, and into the office. Nothing unusual had happened during their absence. Everything was in its usual place.

Having gone to bed, Theophraste lay awake for some time. He amused himself by thinking of Cartouche and all the wonderful things he had done. While he tried to fall asleep, his mind kept continually going back to the same theme. Suddenly he opened his frightened eyes in the darkness, and laid his hand on his wife's arm, waking her. Then, in a voice so low that he alone knew he had spoken, he said, "Do you hear anything?" Marceline woke with a start, and they both

strained their ears. They heard something in the apartment. It was a peculiar sound like the purring of a cat. It seemed as if it came from the office, and they listened intently for some minutes, too frightened to move.

Theophraste, as we have said before, was not a brave man, and he would have given a hundred thousand francs for it to have been daylight. Marceline whispered in his ear, "Go and see what is the matter. You must, Theophraste. Take the revolver from the table drawer." Theophraste just had the strength to answer, "You know very well it is not loaded."

They listened again, but the noise had stopped. Marceline hoped that they had been mistaken. Theophraste, quaking with fear, then got out of the bed, and taking the revolver, softly opened the door which led into the office.

The night was clear, and the moon shone across the large blue table-cloth which was spread on the table. Theophraste recoiled. He pushed the door to by pressing his back against it, as if he would hinder whatever he had seen from entering the room. "What is it?" demanded Marceline, raising herself from the pillows. Theophraste, with chattering teeth, answered, "It does not purr any more, but it has moved. It is on the tea-table."

"What is on the tea-table?"

"The cat!"

"Are you sure it was in its right place last night?" asked Marceline.

"Perfectly sure. I put my scarf-pin on it when I was going to bed."

"Oh, you only think that you did it," said Marceline. "Shall I light the lamp?"

"No, no. We can escape in the darkness. If I open the door on the landing we can call the conciergerie."

"You are not afraid, then?" asked Marceline, who, now that she heard it was the cat, was recovering her senses. "It was an illusion that we had. You must have changed his place last night."

"After all it is very possible," said Theophraste. He only wanted to get back to bed.

"Put it in its place," insisted Marceline. Theophraste decided to do so. He went into the office, and with a hasty, trembling hand took the cat from the tea-table and put it on the desk, and soon found himself back in bed. By this time they had recovered their composure.

They even smiled in the darkness to think that they had been afraid. However, a quarter of an hour elapsed, and they were frightened to hear

again the rattle of the ornament. "Oh, it is not possible," cried Marceline; "we are the victims of hallucination. There is nothing to astonish us after what has happened at the Conciergerie."

It was Marceline who got up this time. She pulled open the door of the office, and came back at once towards Theophraste, and said with a voice so weak that it seemed far away, "You did not, then, put the cat back on the desk?"

"But I did," growled Theophraste.

"Well, but it is back on the tea-table."

"My God!" said the man hiding his head under the coverings.

Marceline was convinced that, in the disordered condition of his mind, he had left the cat on the tea-table. She took it, holding her breath, and put it on the table. The cat rattled audibly again as she did it, but neither Marceline nor Theophraste saw anything in this. Marceline went back to bed again.

Another quarter of an hour passed, at the end of which they again heard the same noise. Then an incredible thing happened. Theophraste turned like a tiger and cried out, "What is it? It is only too true, something unusual is happening."

## CHAPTER XIV

### *Petito Loses His Ears*

WE will now go downstairs to the flat below, into the apartment occupied by Signor and Signora Petito. Signora Petito is saying, "I do not understand M. Longuet's conduct at the dinner at all. He spoke such vague, peculiar words."

"Well," answers Signor Petito, "he has this treasure which may be found in the environs of Paris, and he is thinking of it. It is certainly very interesting, and I would like to find it myself. According to the document, my opinion is that one ought to look either at the side of Montrouge, or at the side of Montmartre. I am inclined to think that it is Montmartre, on account of the 'Coq.' There was a castle 'Coq de Percherons' there. You will find it if you look at this plan of old Paris."

They looked at the plan, and after a short

silence Signor Petito added, "It is still very vague. For myself, I think that one ought to attach importance to the words 'Le Four.'"

"My dear, then it is more and more vague," said his wife, "for there are many furnaces around Paris. There were plaster furnaces, and quick-lime furnaces, and many others."

"My idea," said Signor Petito, "is that Le Four does not mean 'the furnaces.' I remember that there was a space after the word 'Four,' on the paper. Pass my dictionary." Signora Petito, noiselessly, and with great care, brought him the lexicon. They looked over all the words beginning with the syllable 'Four.' On account of the article, *le*, they decided not to pay any attention to feminine words.

Just then the clock on the mantel-shelf struck midnight. Signora Petito got up, and said to the Signor, "Now is the time. We will find some useful information on the floor above. They cannot hear you in your stockinged feet. I will watch behind their door at the head of their stairway. You know there is no danger, they are still in the country."

Two minutes later a form glided over the landing at M. Longuet's door, put a key into the lock stealthily, and went into the vestibule. M. Lon-

guet's apartment was arranged exactly like Signor Petito's, and so the latter easily found his way into the dining-room. He acted with perfect composure, believing the apartment to be uninhabited. He pushed the office door open. As it was evidently the lock of the desk that he wished to reach. Signor Petito took the ornament which inconvenienced him and placed it on the tea-table. Then he quitted the room noiselessly, and entered the dining-room, from there into the vestibule, for he seemed to hear a voice on the stairway. He was without doubt mistaken, for he listened intently for some time without hearing a sound. When he came back into the office, he found the cat again on the desk, and purring. His hair seemed to stand on end, for the horror which had seized upon him was not to be compared to the horror which had seized upon those in the next room.

Signor Petito remained immovable in the bluish moonlight. With a timid hand he seized the little black cat. The movement caused by this made the cat purr again. Now he understood that in the cat's pasteboard body there was a little ball, balanced in such a manner that it ingeniously simulated the purring of a cat when it was moved.

How frightened he had been! He felt a fool. All was explained. Did he not remove the cat be-

fore returning to the vestibule? Instead of having placed the cat on the table, as he thought, he must have replaced it on the desk. That was a simple explanation, and he paid the strictest attention this time when he placed it on the table.

While he was doing this there was a fresh noise on the stairway. It was only Signora Petito, who had very incautiously sneezed.

Signor Petito went hurriedly and silently back into the vestibule, and when he was reassured, went back into the office again.

The black cat had been returned to the desk again!

He thought that he would die of fright. A miraculous intervention had arrested him on the verge of a great crime, and he uttered a hurried prayer in which he promised heaven never to do it again. However, another quarter of an hour passed, and he attributed these surprising events to his conscience, and returning, placed the cat back again on the table.

Just then the door of the room was violently opened, and Signor Petito fell into the arms of M. Longuet, who did not express the least astonishment.

M. Longuet threw Signor Petito on the floor in disgust, and picking up the ornament, opened the

window, and threw it out into the street. During this time, Signor Petito, who had gotten up, could hardly compose his features, for Mme. Longuet, in her chemise, was threatening him with a revolver. He could only stammer, "I beg your pardon, I really thought that you were in the country."

M. Longuet went up to him, and taking him by one of his ears, said, "Now, my dear Signor Petito, we must talk."

Marceline lowered the barrel of her revolver, and felt pleased at seeing her husband show such courage.

"You see, my dear Signor Petito," continued Theophraste, "that I am calm. A little while ago I was getting angry, but it was only at that little cat which was keeping me from going to sleep, and which I have thrown out of the window. But be assured, my dear Signor, I shall not throw you out of the window. You have not kept me from sleeping, you have even taken the precaution to put on slippers. Many thanks. But why, my dear Signor, do you make that ridiculous grimace? It is without doubt on account of your ear. I have some good news to tell you which will perhaps put you at ease about your ears. YOUR EARS will make you suffer no more."

Having finished his sarcastic talk, Theophraste begged his wife to pass him a cloth, and ordered Signor Petito to go into the kitchen. "Do not be surprised that I receive you in the kitchen. I prize my carpets very much, and you will probably bleed like a pig."

M. Longuet drew towards him a white wooden table, which he placed in the middle of the kitchen. He asked Marceline to place an oil-cloth over the table, and get him a large bowl. He then asked for a carving set, which he said she would find in the dresser drawer, which stood in the dining-room. Marceline tried to ask for an explanation, but her husband looked at her so coldly and so strangely, that, shuddering, she could only obey. Signor Petito, in a cold perspiration, tried to reach the door of the kitchen, but M. Longuet stood between him and the means of exit, and commanded him to be seated.

"Signor Petito," said he, in a tone of the most sarcastic politeness, "you have a face which displeases me. It is not your fault; but then it is not mine, either. Certainly you are by far the most cowardly and the most despicable of thieves. But what does that matter? But do not smile, Signor Petito." It is certain that Signor Petito had no intention of smiling.

"You have ridiculously large ears, and surely with such ears, you dare not pass by the corner of the Guiliere."

Signor Petito clasped his hands and stammered, "But my wife awaits me."

"What are you doing, Marceline?" Theophraste cried impatiently. "Do not you see that Signor Petito is in a hurry? His wife is waiting for him. Have you the carving set?"

"I could not find the fork," answered Marceline in a trembling voice. (The truth was, Marceline did not know what to say, for she believed that her husband had become completely insane, and between Signor Petito the house-breaker, and Theophraste mad, she was in anything but an enviable position.) She had hidden herself behind a cupboard door, and her distress was so extreme, that in turning suddenly, when Theophraste hurled a volley of insults at her, she upset her favorite vase, which made a loud noise, thus adding to the confusion.

Theophraste resorted once more to oaths and insults, and called Marceline in such a tone that she ran to him in spite of herself. The spectacle which awaited her in the kitchen was atrocious. Signor Petito was lying on the wooden table, his eyes bursting from their orbits, a handkerchief

in his mouth, which nearly suffocated him. Theophraste had had the time, and was possessed with the extraordinary strength to tie his hands and ankles with cords. Signor Petito's head hung a little beyond the edge of the table, and under it there was a bowl which M. Longuet had placed there to prevent soiling anything. The latter with palpitating nostrils had caught Signor Petito by the hair with his left hand. In his right he clasped the handle of a notched kitchen knife.

Gnashing his teeth, he cried out, "Strike the flags."

As he said this he made the first cut at the right ear. The cartilage resisted. Signor Petito's muffled groans could just be heard. M. Longuet, who was still in his night-shirt, worked like a surgeon bent upon a difficult operation. Marceline's strength failed her, and she fell upon her knees. Signor Petito, in attempting to struggle, threw the blood from his ears across the kitchen, and Theophraste, letting go his hair, struck him a blow across the head. "Be a little careful," said he, "you are splashing the blood all over everything."

The cartilage still resisted, so taking the right ear in his left hand, with a strong blow with the notched knife he tore it away. He placed the ear in a saucer which he had previously placed on

the sink, and allowed the water to flow over it. Then he came back to the second ear. Marceline groaned very loudly, but he silenced her with a glance. The second ear was cut off much more easily, and with more dispatch.

By this time Signor Petito had swallowed half of the handkerchief, and was suffocating. Theophraste took the handkerchief out of his mouth and threw it out into the clothes-basket near by. He then untied his ankles and wrists, and signed to him to leave the apartment as soon as possible. He had the forethought to wrap his head in a dish-cloth, so that the blood would not stain the stairway or the janitor's family. As Signor Petito passed by, in agony, Theophraste put the washed ears into his vest pocket.

"You forgot something," he said. "What would Signora Petito say if you went back without your ears?" He closed the door. Looking at Marceline, who was on her knees, paralysed with horror, he wiped the bloody knife on his sleeve.

## CHAPTER XV

### *Adolphe Consulted*

**T**HEOPHRASTE, the next day, seemed to have forgotten all the incidents of the night before, or at least to attach very little importance to them.

As to Marceline, she was far too agitated to make any direct mention of it. However, she knew Adolphe would be calling at noon and she was resolved to find out the cause of Theophraste's actions before he came so that she could tell Adolphe the best to act. The thing that struck her most was Theophraste's sudden show of courage and strength. Before he had shown excessive lack of courage, and he was naturally physically weak. Suddenly, to be seized with all the nerve necessary to meet a burglar and then to have the strength to gag and bind him and cut off his ears, was unnatural. He had always recoiled from the sight of blood, and here he was fairly reveling in it. What

could all this mean? He had suddenly turned from a quiet, inoffensive citizen to a ghoul.

It was with these thoughts that she approached Theophraste and demanded an explanation. He at first was loath to tell her, but her entreaties prevailed, and he eventually told her that it was the spirit of Cartouche that had seized him and forced him to do these horrible actions. He told her with a sort of bravado that there had been more than one hundred and fifty assassinations laid to his account.

Marceline was in a terrible state of mind and shrank from him. She declared that nothing in the world would make her live with him. She would apply for a divorce. She thought she had married an honest man, and now she had discovered him to be a thief and murderer. Here were enough grounds for a separation, and she declared her intention of securing it.

At this Theophraste became very melancholy, and entreated her to think of his side of the calamity. He told her how necessary her help was to him, and with Adolphe's and her assistance he thought he could throw off this evil influence. By this time he had become quite rational, and they decided to consult Adolphe, and if necessary, have him live with them. It can be well understood that,

Marceline readily acquiesced in this suggestion. Adolphe arrived about 1 o'clock, and she took him into the sitting-room and was soon in earnest and animated council with him. Theophraste went into his office and waited anxiously for them to join him. After some time they returned, and Marceline insisted that Theophraste should do all that Adolphe should ask of him, which he readily consented to do, having confidence in his friend.

Later on in the afternoon Theophraste and Adolphe went for a walk into the city. Theophraste immediately began asking questions as to Adolphe's progress in the search for the treasures. He, however, was in no mood to tell much. Marceline's story of the night before had driven all thoughts of the treasure out of his head, and he answered somewhat abruptly that nothing of importance had been found, and that he must think of Theophraste's health first, before taking any further steps.

It was obvious to Theophraste that Adolphe was evading the subject, and he was determined to find out more of the matter.

He felt that Adolphe had more information, and so pressed him to speak. Adolphe then told how he had discovered that after the war most of the soldiers who had been serving with Cartouche had

been discharged, and were left with no means of livelihood, and so, recognizing him as having the talent of a leader, they formed themselves into a party of bandits, and placed him at their head. At this time the police force of Paris was quite inadequate to cope with the many crimes; therefore Cartouche and his comrades resolved to turn their attention to this. He divided his men into troops, and gave them each a quarter, to guard over which he placed an intelligent lieutenant. When anybody was found out after curfew he was politely accosted and requested to turn over a sum of money, or if he had no money on him, to part with his coat. In exchange for this he was given a pass which entitled him to walk through Paris in perfect security at any time he pleased. He would have nothing to fear from Cartouche's men. If he showed any resistance he was immediately killed. Cartouche had the clergy on his side, and was often able to make good use of them. One priest named Le Ratichon, was even hanged for him.

On reaching the Hotel de Ville, Adolphe stopped and asked Theophraste if he cared to cross the Place de l'Hotel de Ville.

He answered, "If you wish, certainly we will."

"Have you often crossed the place?" said Adolphe.

"Yes, very often," replied Theophraste.

"And nothing unusual has happened? Is there any place in Paris which you have some difficulty in passing?"

"Why, no, of course not. What is there to hinder me from going anywhere?"

However, Adolphe's look made him reflect, and then he recalled having several times walked up the Place de l'Ordson, and when in front of the Institute he changed his mind and retraced his steps. He accounted for this rather by his absent-mindedness than by anything unusual. He recalled that he had never passed through the Rue Mazarine or crossed the Pont-Neuf. Neither had he crossed the Petit Pont. He had always turned at the corner of the Rue Ville du Temple, near the house with the grated windows.

"Why," Adolphe asked, "can't you pass these places?"

"I think it is because the paving stones are red; and I dislike that color."

"You remember the Place de Grere?"

"Why, yes. It was there that the pillory and scaffold were erected. The wheel was placed there on execution days in front of the Rue Vanniere. There was the old coal harbor. I never passed that place without counselling my comrades to

avoid the wheel. However, I will wager not one profited by it."

"Nor you either," said Adolphe. "It was there that you suffered the final torment. It was there that you were racked and expired by the tortures of the wheel."

## CHAPTER XVI

### *On Private Ground*

**A**MONG all the paper that I found in the oaken chest, those which related to the death of Cartouche were by far the most curious, and presented the highest interest, in that they partly contradicted history. They denied with such persuasive strength, and such undeniable logic, that it is difficult to see how the great historians could have overlooked the real details, and the generations which have succeeded since the year 1721, should not have suspected the truth. History teaches us that Cartouche, after having suffered the rack in its most cruel form, during which he confessed nothing, not even a name or a fact, this Cartouche, who had only to die, and nothing to gain from his confession, nothing to soften his last moments, was brought to torment in the Place de la Grere, and it was there that he decided to speak. That they took him back to the Hotel de Ville, and

that it was there that he betrayed his principal accomplices, after which he was racked and fastened to the cross, where he expired.

Immediately after this 360 persons were arrested, with the result that they were tried, and judicially massacred, the last one of them being executed two years after Cartouche.

Now in following the papers of Theophraste, we are not doing full justice to Cartouche. While Cartouche was an object of terror, he was at the same time an object of admiration. His courage knew no bounds, and he proved it at the time of his torture. At the moments when his sufferings were greatest, he did not speak. It was said that he only wished to die bravely. The great ladies of the court and of the city had hired windows and points of vantage from which to witness his death, and he did not wish to show them on the scaffold, a cowardly dastard, but the most daring and bravest of bandits. It is an historical fact that of the 360 persons who were arrested after his death, it was found that Cartouche was loved by all. The official report showed women throwing themselves in the arms of L'Enfant at the Hotel de Ville, even after the denunciation.

It is not necessary to mention all the protests that M. Longuet made against the dishonorable

death attributed to Cartouche, but some of the preceding lines seem to show that he was right.

It was while conversing on this question that Theophraste and his friend arrived at the Rue de le Petit Pont, without passing over the bridge.

"My dear friend," said Theophraste, "look at that house at the side of the hotel, which has the sign, 'To the rendezvous of the Maraiches,' and tell me if you find anything remarkable about it." They were then in front of a low, narrow and dirty old house, a hotel. The door on the ground floor disclosed a counter for the sale of drinks. Above the door was a notice, "To the rendezvous of the kitchen-gardeners." The hotel was leaning against a vast building of the eighteenth century, which Theophraste pointed out with his green umbrella. This building had a balcony of iron, wrought in a delicate design of the period.

"I observe a beautiful balcony, of which the feature in the design seems to be the quiver of the god of love."

"Anything more?" asked Theophraste.

"I do not notice anything further," said Adolphe.

"Do you notice the large gratings on the windows? There was a time, my dear Adolphe, when windows that had gratings on were very much in

vogue. There were never so many grilled windows in Paris as in the year 1720, and I would swear that these were placed there the day after the affair of the Chateaux Augustins. The Parisians always protected their ground floor, but this did not trouble us very much, for we had Simon L'Auvergnat."

Adolphe took the opportunity of asking Theophraste exactly who this Simon L'Auvergnat was. He was always referring to him, and without any obvious reasons.

"He was a very useful person," said Theophraste, "he was the base of my column."

"What do you mean by the 'base of your column'?"

"You do not understand. Wait, and you soon will. Imagine yourself to be Simon L'Auvergnat. Stand like this," and he indicated the position, against the wall of the house, that Adolphe was to take. He spread his legs and lowered his head, and raising his arms, leaned against the wall. "I will place you here," said he, "on account of the cornice which is to the left. I remember that it was very convenient. Now, since you are the base of my column, I lean on that base and then——" Before M. Lecamus had had time to see what was going to happen, Theophraste gripped his should-

ers, leaped on the cornice of the hotel, from there to the balcony of the hotel at the side, and entered a room of which the window had been opened.

M. Lecamus, stupefied, looked up into the air, and was wondering to himself how on earth his friend could have disappeared in such a way, when suddenly piercing cries came from the room, and a voice yelled out, "Help! Robbers! Murder! Help!" Fearing some dreadful act, Adolphe rushed into the hotel. The passers-by were stopping in the street, and before long a crowd had collected. He leapt over the vast stairway with the agility of a young man, and arrived on the first landing at the moment the door opened, and Theophraste appeared, hat in hand. He was bowing to an old lady, whose teeth were chattering from fright, and whose hair was all done up in curl papers. "Dear madame," he was saying, "if I had believed for one instant that I would have caused you such surprise, I would have remained downstairs. I am neither a robber, nor an assassin, my dear madam. All this is the fault of my friend Adolphe, who wanted me to show him how Simon L'Auvergnat could serve me as the base of a column."

Adolphe had already seized his arm, and was drawing him toward the stairway. He made signs

to the lady from behind Theophraste trying to make her understand that his friend was off his head. Thereupon, she fell unconscious into the hands of a chambermaid, and the stairway was soon filled with a crowd.

Adolphe profited by this to take Theophraste away. They passed through without hindrance, and were soon in the street again. Adolphe seemed not to hear Theophraste's protests. With one hand he dragged him towards the Rue Huchette, and with the other dried the sweat which was running down his forehead.

"Where are you taking me to?" asked Theophraste.

"To the house of one of my friends in the Rue Huchette."

When they reached the house in the Rue Huchette, they passed under a red porch, and into a very old house. Adolphe seemed to know the people, for he did not wait to be ushered in. He made Theophraste climb half a dozen stone steps which were extremely worn, and pushed open a thick door which was at the end of the court.

They were now in a sort of vestibule, lighted by a large lamp in the shape of a huge ball, suspended by iron chains from the stone ceiling.

"Wait for me here," said Adolphe, after having

closed the door by which they had entered. He promised not to be long and disappeared.

Theophraste seated himself in a large arm-chair, and looked around him. What he saw on the wall amused him. There was an incredible quantity of words painted in black letters. They seemed to cover the whole surface of the wall, in no sort of order at all. He spelt some of them. There was Iris, Thabet, Rush, Jakin, Bokez, Thebe, Paracaler, and the word "Iboah," which appeared in many places. Turning toward the other wall, against which he had been leaning, he saw a Sphinx and the Pyramids.

An immense arch arose, and in the center of this was Christ, His arms extended out into a circle of flowers. On the arch were the words, "Amphitheater of the wise eternal son of Truth." It was the arch of the "Rose Cross." Below was this inscription, "There are none so blind as those who will not see." Looking around he came across another inscription, in letters of gold: "As soon as you have won a fact, apply yourself to it with your whole mind. Look for the salient points in it. Behold the knowledge which is in it. Give way to the hypothesis. Hunt for the fault in it." (Instructions to the clinic of the Hotel Dieu, Prof. Trousseau.) Besides this he saw figures of forles

and vultures and jackals, men with birds' heads, beetles, and the emblem of Osiris—an ass, and an eye. Finally he read these words in blue letters: "The more the soul is rooted in her instincts, the more will she be forgotten in the flesh, the less consciousness she will have of her immortality, and the more she will remain a prisoner in living corpses."

Impatient at the absence of his friend, and becoming a little frightened, he attempted to raise the drapery behind which Adolphe had disappeared. But as he ascended the step his head struck an object which was suspended in the air, and looking up he found it was a skeleton.

We have said that M. Lecamus had applied himself to the occult sciences, and practiced spiritualism, but from what we know of M. Lecamus' character, we feel that he was only an amateur in these things. He only practiced spiritualism for show, for snobbery, and to make an impression at the parties which he used to frequent. He believed no more in spiritualism than he believed in love. The day came, however, when his heart gave way, and when his spirit humiliated itself. It was the day that he met Marceline and M. Eliphaste de St. Elm. He met Marceline at a séance, where they had made him the father spirit. At this

séance M. Eliphaste was recognized as the chief. However, this gentleman was rarely seen. He led a most retired and mysterious life at the foot of the Rue Huchette.

Marceline had attended this séance by the will of M. Longuet, who, having been to the Salon Pneumatics, insisted that Marceline should be presented there. He thought that it was a kind of worldly society, where such subjects as pneumatology were discussed.

The day that Marceline made her entrance to the Salon M. Eliphaste de St. Elm was to read a paper on the Gourse. Mme. Longuet found herself by chance next to M. Lecamus, and after discussing a good many points in the lecture, they found that they had a great many things in common, and by a curious chance M. Lecamus discovered that he was an old college chum of M. Longuet's. It was thus that he became welcomed into the family circle of M. Longuet.

This preamble is necessary for us to understand the presence of M. Lecamus and Marceline together in the house of M. Eliphaste de St. Elm, at the foot of the Rue de Huchette, while Theophraste was waiting for him wearily in the vestibule. The visit was the result of a conversation between M. Lecamus and Mme. Longuet, early

that morning. She had hidden nothing from him regarding the events of the nights before, and the history of Signor Petito's ears showed to M. Lecamus the necessity of taking precautions against the spirit of Cartouche. At the bottom of his heart M. Lecamus felt to a certain extent guilty for the follies of Theophraste, and he had been asking himself, lately, just how far he could let this reincarnated soul go, for M. Lecamus was a novice at spiritualism, and it was his intention to experiment with Theophraste and Cartouche.

He was no sooner assured of having in his hands a reincarnated soul, than his curiosity aroused in him a desire to make use of it. This was exactly what he had done in putting the reincarnated soul of Cartouche before his portrait, without taking any precautions, and now he did not know how he could stop that which he had unconsciously set in motion. He knew how to arouse such a spirit, but he did not know how to stop it.

It was for this reason that he and Mme. Longuet had come this morning to beg M. St. Elm to exercise his influence, for there was not a cleverer guide for reincarnated souls in Paris.

In the meantime, Theophraste had been locked up in the vestibule, and when he struck his head against the skeleton, he began to think that it would be more tranquil in a mound at St. Chaumont. The corridor in which he found himself did not have a single window. A red gloom lighted it from one end to the other. It came from the cellar, and penetrated the thick pavement glass. The corridor had crevices and angles. He came to a corner and stopped abruptly. He was impatient to go ahead, and went into one of the two branching passageways which ran from the corridor. Five minutes later he found himself at the same cross passage. Then he went up the first corridor again, taking the direction that he had followed in coming out to the vestibule, but to his great surprise he could not find the vestibule. He wandered about for what seemed to him several hours, and he was just giving up hope of ever getting out of this labyrinth, when he saw Adolphe in the distance. He ran up to him and was on the point of reproving him for having kept him waiting so long, when Adolphe said to him sadly: "Come, Marceline is in there; we are going to present you to a good friend."

Theophraste found himself in a large, dark room, where his attention was attracted by a great

light which fell on the figure of a man. But strange to say, the light did not seem to fall on the man, but rather to radiate from him. In fact, when the figure moved it seemed to carry the light with it. Before the flambeau a woman was standing in a humble attitude, with clasped hands and bowed head.

Then Theophraste heard a voice, a friendly voice, a manly voice, a voice sweeter than the sweetest voice of woman, which said to him: "Come to me without fear."

That which astonished M. Longuet above all else was the astral light which showed up the noble features of M. Eliphaste de St. Elm. He was a person of divine elegance, as elegant as a Christ on the Tripoli.

"I do not know where I am," said Theophraste, "but it gives me confidence to see my friend Adolphe, and my wife, Marceline, at your side. However, I should like to know your name."

"My dear sir," said the harmonious voice, "I am called M. Eliphaste de St. Elm."

"Well," said Theophraste, "my name is Cartouche. But it has been believed for a long, long time that this name was given to me as a nickname."

"You are not Cartouche," said Eliphaste.

"Your name is Theophraste Longuet. You will pardon me, but there is no longer any need for confusion; you were formerly called Cartouche, but now you are called Theophraste Longuet."

M. Theophraste then recalled a number of personages with whom he had, in the spirit of Cartouche, been speaking. They were all of the eighteenth century—Gatelard, Marie Antoinette Neron, and others, and it was evident that his mind was dwelling on that period, and he was living in the present a life of the past.

Theophraste was still talking of these times, when the half shadows which seemed to envelop him were suddenly dissipated, and the room appeared in the splendid brightness of day. He looked around with evident satisfaction, first at his wife, and then at Adolphe, and finally at M. Eliphaste. Eliphaste had entirely lost his supernatural aspect, his astral mantle had disappeared, and if his features had still their sublime and unusual pallor, he seemed, nevertheless, a man like other men.

"Ah, this is better," said Theophraste, sighing.

"It is not necessary for you to think any more of old Paris," said M. Eliphaste. "You have nothing more to do with it. You are Theophraste, and it is the year of grace, 1899."

“Possibly,” replied Theophraste, who was obstinate; “but the question is, what about my treasure? I have a perfect right to look at a plan of old Paris, for I can follow the place where I buried it formerly, and find the place where I must look.”

Eliphaste, speaking to Lecamus, said, “I have often witnessed the crises of Karma, but never has it been given to me to study one of such strength.”

Eliphaste reflected, and then leading Theophraste to the right, he brought him before a map of real Paris. “Behold,” said he, “the exact point where Le Fouches de Mount Fançons were. As to the mouth of the Choppinettes, and of the Coq, they were at those two points of the Monte St. Chaumont. The forks were found on a small eminence on the side of the principal mound, but far to the right of where the Protestant of the Rue de Crimée stands to-day. To find your treasure again, my friend, it will be necessary to search in that triangle. The mounds, as you say, have been the remains of a filled-in ditch, and I doubt very much if your treasure could still be found there. I specified for you the old space on a modern plan to disillusion you. You must clear your mind. Think no more on your treasures. Do not live in the past. You must live in the

present, and for the future. You must drive away Cartouche, because Cartouche is no more. It is Theophraste Longuet who is."

M. Eliphaste pronounced these words with great force.

## CHAPTER XVII

### *They Decide to Kill*

M. ELIPHASTE had been reasoning with Theophraste, and using all the arguments of spiritualists to persuade him to make an effort to rid himself of the spirit of Cartouche.

"However," said Theophraste, "I thank you for the interest you have taken in me, and for your sympathy; but I tell you, you can do nothing for me. You say I am sick, but I am not. If I were you could cure me. You also say that I am to drive away this Cartouche; but, though that is easily said, I can assure you that it is not so easily done. It is impossible, my dear M. Eliphaste."

"And yet," said M. Eliphaste, "it is necessary. For if we do not succeed in driving him out, we must kill him. That is an operation the result of which I cannot vouch. It is a delicate operation, and full of dangers."

M. Eliphaste had hoped that this obsession of Cartouche was only imaginary, and so by reasoning he could drive it away. But, alas, the reality of it was only too true, and Theophraste, while willing to help him, could not get himself to believe M. Eliphaste's arguments.

"You understand," said M. Eliphaste, "your case is most extraordinary. Everybody in the world has lived before, and will live again. This is the Law of Karma. It may be possible to find some one who was a friend of Cartouche's. The true object of that wonderful evolution of souls through the bodies, is to develop and qualify them to enjoy the perfect happiness which will finally be the inheritance of the fortunate ones who will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. It is thought that at each birth, the personality differs from the preceding one, but it is only the veritable, divine and spiritual I. These divers personalities are in some measures only the links of the infinite chain of life, which constitutes, throughout the ages, our immortal individuality."

The admirable wisdom of the teaching appealed to Theophraste immensely. Eliphaste had shown himself so much the master of his thoughts, that he could not understand why he had remained ignorant so long, without even having suspected

these wonderful truths. He saw the great difference between Eliphaste and Adolphe, the difference, as he said, "between the Man of Reason and the Learned Ape."

Eliphaste continued: "When one is persuaded of this great truth, one need not be astonished at the wonderful things that happen in the present—if they recall events of former times. But to live according to the Law of Wisdom, one must live in the present, and not look behind."

Theophraste had too often looked behind. His mind had occupied itself with thoughts of the past. If this had continued, in a very short time Theophraste would have gone quite mad.

And so Theophraste thought: "I must either forget Cartouche, throw him off completely, or develop all his characteristics."

M. Eliphaste told them that what men call vocations to-day were only a latent revelation of the past, and they could only be explained that way. He told them that what was called facility among men to-day was nothing else but retrospective sympathy for some objects that they knew better than others, having studied them better before the real and actual life. He said that we even assume the gesture of the past without knowing it. He himself had seen, on the eve of the Battle

of the Bourget, two young men fall near him, handsome as demigods, brave as Castor and Pollux, and who succumbed with grace that the heroes showed in dying at Salamis, Marathon, or at Platies. M. Eliphaste then pressed Theophraste to his heart, breathed on his forehead and his eyes, and then asked him if he was quite persuaded of the truth. He said that to be happy we must seek to give an account of ourselves, as to the perpetual changes of our condition, and that by this we learned to live in the present, and to comprehend that the future belonged to us entirely. Are we not the children of the Eternal, in whose eyes a thousand years are as a day, and a day as a thousand years?

Theophraste said to him that he was not at all astonished at having been Cartouche—it seemed so natural to his mind—that he would never more dwell on it, and he declared that at present Cartouche was driven away.

Thereupon Marceline asked what time it was, and Adolphe told her it was eleven o'clock, and so they rose to take their leave. However, just before leaving, an incident occurred which went to prove too clearly that the spirit of Cartouche had not left Theophraste.

Upon Adolphe's declaring that it was eleven

o'clock, Theophraste took out his watch and contended that it was half after eleven, and after a few words, he said, "You can cut off my right hand if I am wrong."

Turning to M. Eliphaste, that gentleman confirmed M. Lecamus' statement, whereupon Theophraste picked up a small knife which was lying near, and would have severed his right hand but for M. Eliphaste, who, grasping the situation, seized Theophraste's uplifted hand with dexterity and incredible strength. He ordered him to drop the knife, and told him that he was not keeping to the compact. M. Eliphaste felt that it was no good arguing with him on the matter of the spirit of Cartouche, and despaired of ever ridding him of the spirit by reasoning. He turned to Adolphe and said, "Let us go. It is too late. There is nothing to do but to kill him."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### *The Operation .*

**T**HIS savage onslaught, which but for the presence of mind of M. Eliphaste would have terminated in the amputation of M. Longuet's hand, proved to them that the sanguine imagination of Cartouche had so completely invaded the brain of M. Longuet that it seemed to them the only remedy for such a misfortune was the death of Cartouche.

M. Eliphaste did not hesitate. He had reasoned with him in vain, and had even hoped at one time that he had been victorious, but this incident undoubtedly proved otherwise. He rose and looked at Theophraste, giving him a long, steady glance, which seemed to pierce the uttermost depths of his soul. Theophraste sighed several times and began to tremble violently, when M. Eliphaste cried, "Cartouche, I order you to sleep." Theophraste fell as if stricken on the armchair which

stood behind him, and did not make another move. His respiration was so silent that they doubted if he still lived. Marceline ran to him alarmed, but M. Eliphaste restrained her, saying, "All is well. The operation of the death of Cartouche has begun."

Adolphe knew, from several examples, that there is always a great risk when one wishes to kill a reincarnated soul—that is to say, to throw it back toward the past. There is a risk of killing the body in which it is reincarnated. And so he knew that trying to kill the soul of Cartouche without killing Theophraste was a great undertaking.

It needed all the authority, and all the science of M. Eliphaste, to calm them in the extremity in which they found themselves. He was the most intellectual and scientific spiritualist of the day. He had the most absolute and domineering will that the world had seen since Jacques Molay, to whom he had succeeded, by the supreme direction of the secret order of Temphis. He had made an allegorical demonstration of his last treatise on "Psychic Surgery," and had analyzed the subject in his pamphlet on "Astral Scalpel."

It is necessary to enumerate all the accomplishments of M. Eliphaste, for it gives Adolphe a chance of refuting in advance the reproach put

upon him for letting him treat his best friend with the utmost severity. The criminal eccentricities of M. Longuet, of which Signor Petito was the first victim, made him dread the most irremediable catastrophes, and it was for this reason that he was led to consider the operation of Cartouche as a benefit, not only possible, but probable, without too great a risk to Theophraste. As to Mme. Longuet, her faith in M. Eliphaste was so great that at first she only made a few remarks, so as to relieve her of any responsibility, and then the terror that she had of sleeping with Cartouche made her, over and above everything, desire his death.

M. Eliphaste told Adolphe to take Theophraste's heels, and he took and held him under the armpits, and they carried him into the sub-cellar, where a laboratory had been fitted up, which was lighted in the day by gas, with large, red, hissing flames.

Mme. Longuet followed. They placed Theophraste on a bed, and bound him down with straps. He was still under the mesmeric influence. M. Eliphaste stood over him, watching him closely, for a quarter of an hour, during which time there was a deep silence in the room. At length a

voice was heard. It was M. Eliphaste praying. The prayer began in this way:

“In the beginning there was silence. Oh, age Eternal, source of all ages——”

When the prayer was ended, M. Eliphaste took Theophraste by the hand and seemed to command him without speaking. He questioned Theophraste by the strength of his domineering spirit—only by the answers Theophraste made could they understand what he had been commanded to tell. Theophraste said, without effort, “Yes, I see. Yes, I am. I am M. Theophraste Longuet; in an apartment of the Rue Gerondeau.” M. Eliphaste turned toward Adolphe and Marceline. “The operation is a bad one,” he said in a deep voice. “I have put Cartouche to sleep, and Theophraste answers me. He is sleeping in the present. We must not precipitate matters. It will be dangerous.”

“I am in the Rue Gerondeau—in the apartment under mine—and I see stretched on the bed a man without ears. In front of him a woman; a dark woman—she is pretty—she is young—her name is Regina—the woman is saying to the man, ‘Signor Petito, as true as I am called Regina, and that you have lost your ears, you will cease to see me in forty-eight hours if you have not found

the means to give me a little comfort, to which I have a right. When I married you, you basely deceived me, both as to your fortune and as to your intelligence. Your fortune rested only in hopes which have not been realized. What are you going to do?"

"Signor Petito replies, 'My dear Regina, you puzzle me. Leave me in peace to find a trace of the treasures that the imbecile above is incapable of snatching from the profound depths of the earth.'"

. . . . .

Theophraste made them understand, in his sleep, that the imbecile referred to was Cartouche. M. Eliphaste turned toward them, saying, "I expect that word to make him quit the present. Now, madam, the time has come. I am going to tempt God." And then he spoke in a commanding voice, in a voice that it seemed impossible not to obey. "Cartouche," said he, extending his hand above the strapped bed with a commanding majesty, "Cartouche, where wast thou on the night of the first of April, 1721, at ten o'clock?"

"On the night of April first, 1721, at ten o'clock, I struck two light blows on the door, with the intention of making them open the door of the Tavern Reine Margot. I never should have be-

lieved that I could have reached the ironmonger's shop so easily. But I had killed the horse of the French guardsman, and I had thrown those who had followed him into the Seine. At the Reine Margot I found Paletton, Gatelard, and Guenal Noire. La Belle Laittiere was with them. I related the story to them while emptying a bottle of wine. I had confidence in them, and I told them that I suspected Va de Bon Cœur—and perhaps Marie Antoinette—of having whispered something to the spies. They cried out, but I cried out louder than they. I announced to them that I had decided to deal summarily with all who gave me cause to suspect them. I became very angry, and La Belle Laittiere told me that I was no longer bearable. Was it my fault? Every one had betrayed me. I could not sleep two nights consecutively in one place. Where, then, were the days when all Paris was with me? Where, then, was the day of my wedding to Marie Antoinette, when we sang the air of 'Tout joli belle menniere, Tout joli moulin'? Where was now my uncle Taton? Shut up in a castle. And his son? Killed by me because he was going to denounce me. I had done it quickly. A pistol shot, and his corpse was under a pile of rubbish. Then I was sure of his silence. I killed the robber

Pepin, and the police officer Huron. I did not ask anything, only that they leave me alone to police Paris for the security of everybody. My great council," this he murmured to himself, "did not pardon me for having Jacques le Febrere executed. I am no longer bearable, and that is because I wish to live. After that which had come to pass," continued Theophraste in his hypnotic sleep, "and the miraculous way in which I escaped in spite of treachery and the precautions taken by the spies, I did not conceal from Gate-lard or from Guenal Noire that I had decided to leave them.

"I soon left them and opened the door of the Reine Margot. Not a soul in the ironmonger's shop. I was saved. I did not even stop Magdelen, whom I passed while walking along the walls of the cemetery, where I was going to sleep that night. Truth was, I was going to pass the night like a robber in my hole in the Rue Amelot. It was pouring with rain."

. . . . .  
It would be difficult to describe the strange tone in which this narrative was related. The undulation of the phrases, their stops and their stations, then the peculiar monotone in which the words fell from Theophraste's lips while he was in the

hypnotic sleep. His face sometimes expressed anger, sometimes contempt, and sometimes terror.

M. Lecamus, who had seen Cartouche's portrait, recalled that at certain times there was a striking resemblance to that of Theophraste. Just as he was relating the incident of passing Magdalen, and the downpour of rain, Theophraste's face showed a most peculiar expression, changing from joy to most overwhelming despair.

M. Eliphaste, leaning over the bed, asked him: "What then, Cartouche?"

Theophraste replied in a rattling voice: "I killed a passerby."

. . . . .

The operation continued, but it was only by degrees that M. Eliphaste wished to bring Cartouche to the hour of his death. Before making him live his death, it was necessary to make him live a little of his life. That was the reason that M. Eliphaste had thrown the spirit of Cartouche back to the month of April, 1721.

Though the minutes following were terrible for the onlookers, they were worse for Cartouche, who was passing through the end of his career the second time.

It was not until October 11, 1721, that the treason bore fruit.

Coustard, sergeant in the company of Chabannes, took forty men and four sergeants with him, all of whom were designated by Duchatelle, Cartouche's lieutenant, who had betrayed him. This little army, in citizen clothes, concealing its arms very mysteriously, surrounded the house pointed out by Duchatelle.

It could not have been more than nine o'clock in the evening when they arrived in sight of the tavern, *Au Pictolet*, kept by Germain Tassard and his wife, near the *Rue des Trois Bornes*. Tassard was smoking his pipe on the doorstep, when Duchatelle came up and demanded, "Is there nobody upstairs? No? Where are the four ladies?"

Tassard, who expected this question, said, "Go up."

The little troop rushed in, and when they came to the room above, they found Boloquy and Cartouche drinking wine before the fireplace. Gaillard was in bed, and Cartouche was seated on the bed, mending his breeches.

They rushed upon him. The attack was so sudden that he had no time to make any resistance. They tied him with strong ropes, and, placing him in the coach, took him prisoner to Monsieur the Secretary of State. Then he was taken to the *Grande Chatelet*.

He was in his shirt, having had no time to put on his breeches. He kept cool, congratulating the lieutenant who had betrayed him on the fine livery he wore.

As the coach passed down the road, it nearly crushed some poor wretch who was in the way, and Cartouche, seeing his plight, shouted to him that phrase which he seemed to have affected, "It is necessary to look out for the wheel."

All the people ran out to see him on his way to the house of M. the Secretary of State. They cried out, "It is Cartouche! It is Cartouche!" only half believing it, as they had so often been deceived.

While in the prison awaiting trial, Cartouche received many illustrious visitors. The Regent came; the courtesan Emilie and the Mme. le Marechale de Boufflers followed one after the other to pay the prisoner small attentions. Some one had composed a play, and Quinatto, the famous actor of the time, who filled the principal rôle in it, came to ask him for suggestions about the chief scene.

When Cartouche had been sufficiently amused, he began to think of making his escape. He intended doing this in spite of the very close watch that was being kept over him.

After getting out of his dungeon, and just as he was pushing the last bar which separated him from the street and liberty, he was discovered and caught.

Thinking that the Grande Chatelet was not strong enough for so ingenious a man, he was bound securely in chains and taken to the Conciergerie, in the most formidable corner of the tower of Montgomery.

## CHAPTER XIX

### *The Torture Chamber*

**I**T is only the basest of literature that describes without adequate reason the weird, the horrible. However, many authors find it necessary to dilate upon the most satanic personalities of men, and the worst cruelties imaginable.

Therefore, it is only with the knowledge that the recital of the misfortunes of Theophraste is destined to throw a light on the most obscure problems of psychic surgery that the author of these lines proceeds with this description of the most frightful tortures, moral and physical, that have ever been endured by man.

The operation to be performed was a singular one, and full of the gravest of dangers. However, M. Eliphaste was in the habit of performing the most complicated of psychic operations, and the delicacy of his astral scalpel was universally acknowledged. But the difficulty was the delay.

Had M. Lecamus brought Theophraste earlier, the danger would have been less, but now M. Eliphaste recognized the gravity of the case, and he said that to kill Cartouche without killing Longuet was to tempt God. It was the gravest responsibility.

However, he knew how to lead M. Longuet's mind quietly and without haste to the subject of his death, and thus he prepared him for death.

He made him live his death the moment that he made him die his death. Then, at the psychological moment, he made a certain gesture, the double sign which precipitated in death the spirit of the dead, and brought back to life the living mind.

These were the details of the operation to be performed, and the preliminaries, which consisted in making Theophraste live through the last months of Cartouche's life, having been started, M. Eliphaste began asking Theophraste a series of questions. The latter was lying, groaning, on the bed in the laboratory, which was lighted by the hissing scarlet flames.

M. Lecamus and Mme. Longuet sat on a low bench at one side of the room. M. Eliphaste stood beside the bed.

"Where did they take you, Cartouche?"

"In the torture room. My trial is ended. I am

condemned to die on the wheel. Before the torture they wish me to confess the names of my accomplices, my friends, my mistresses. I should rather die on the wheel twice! They shall know nothing!"

"And now, where are you, Cartouche?"

"I am going down a small stairway, at the end of the 'Walk of the Pillory.' I open a grating. I am in the dark cellars. These dungeons do not frighten me. I know them well! Ah! Ah! I was shut up in that dungeon under Phillippe le Bel!"

Then with a terrible power M. Eliphaste cried out, "Cartouche! Thou art Cartouche! Thou art in the dungeons by order of the Regent." Then he repeated to himself, "Phillippe le Bel?" and then to Theophraste again, "Where are we going? Where are we? My God! We must not lose our way! And now where are you, Cartouche?"

"I advance in the darkness of the cellars. There are about me, walking in the dark, so many guardsmen that I cannot tell the number. I see below, far, far below, a ray of light that I know well. It is a square ray of light that the sun has forgotten since the beginning of the history of France. My guards are not French guardsmen. They mistrust all French guardsmen. My guards

are commanded by the Lieutenant of the Short Robe of the Chatelet."

"Where art thou now, Cartouche?"

"I am in the torture chamber. There are before me men clothed in long robes, but I cannot distinguish their faces. They are my commissioners, who have been entrusted with the verifications, as appeared to be the custom. But why do they call it verifications? The thought makes me smile." (Theophraste really smiled as he said this.)

"Where are you now, Cartouche?"

"They put me on the criminal stool. They have put my legs in backings. With incredibly strong cords, they have bound small planks about my legs. I believe truly that the rascals wish to make me suffer to the limit, and the whole day's work will be rough. But I have a heart hardened by courage. They shall not break it!" At this point M. Longuet, on his strapped bed, uttered a fearful cry. His mouth was wide open, and he groaned incessantly. Adolphe and Marceline leaned over him and asked with horror when that howling would cease, and when that mouth would close. But M. Eliphaste only said, "The torture has begun. But if he howls like that at the first blow of the mallet, there is going to be trouble." M. Eliphaste was not expecting those groans. He

paid no attention to the howling. He calmed M. Lecamus and Mme. Longuet with a supreme gesture. He spoke to Theophraste, something they never knew, for the howling prevented them from hearing anything.

At last the howling became groaning, and eventually the groaning itself stopped. Theophraste's face had become comparatively placid.

"Why do you cry out in that way, Cartouche?"

"I scream because it is a punishment that I cannot denounce my accomplices. I have their names on the end of my tongue! They do not see that if I do not denounce them it is because I cannot move the end of my tongue! I cannot! I cannot! And they struck with their mallet again! And they sunk the pieces of wood into my legs again! It is unjust! I cannot move the end of my tongue!"

"What are they doing to you now, Cartouche?"

"The doctor and the surgeon are leaning over me and feeling my pulse. They are congratulating themselves on having chosen that kind of torture, which is, they are saying to the commissioners, the least dangerous to life and the least susceptible to accidents."

"And now, Cartouche, what are they doing to you?"

"They are doing nothing to me, and I regret it, for they have decided to bury the second wedge in me only a half hour after the first, and let the pain which it produced pass away, and the sensibility be entirely restored. I am looking at my judges. They have black mouths. I like the face of the executioner better. He is no more amused than I. He wants to be somewhere else. But there he comes with the second judge. They are all around me. They are over me! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! . . ."

Never had Theophraste looked so terrible. His mouth was wide open, and his tongue seemed paralyzed. Foam was around his lips, and his eyes seemed to start out of his head.

M. Lecamus looked across to M. Eliphaste, who said, when the second howl had died away, "Why do you scream, Cartouche?"

"Because these torturers will not listen to the names that are on the end of my tongue."

"But you have not told us any names. You have only screamed."

"It is Cartouche they are torturing and Longuet who screams," answered Theophraste.

M. Eliphaste was taken aback by this last response. He turned toward the two silent onlook-

ers and said in a low, trembling voice, "Then it is he who is suffering."

There was no room for doubting this truth. The fearful expressions on Theophraste's face as he imagined the executioner forcing the wedge in, showed too plainly that though it was Cartouche whom they tortured, it was Theophraste who really suffered.

M. Eliphaste seemed very concerned. Never before had such a case come before his astral scalpel. The identity of the soul had been proven, and suffering Cartouche had cried out in distress after two centuries. This cry had waited to come from the lips of Theophraste.

M. Eliphaste leaned his head on his hands and prayed. After a short silence he turned to M. Lecamus and said, "We are only at the second wedge, and there are seven of them."

"Do you think my husband will have the strength to bear them?" asked Marceline.

M. Eliphaste leaned over the prostrate form of Theophraste and examined his head, just as the doctor had done to Cartouche in the torture chamber.

"The man is all right," said he. "I don't believe there is anything to fear now. We must kill Cartouche."

"I think so, too," said Lecamus. "It is necessary for the future security and definite happiness of M. Longuet."

M. Eliphaste then continued his interrogations:

"And now what are they doing to you, Cartouche?"

"They are questioning me. I cannot reply. Why doesn't that man in the corner of the dungeon do his duty? I have not yet seen his face. He turned his back to me and made a noise with old irons. The executioner is very quiet. He is leaning against the wall, yawning. There is a lamp on the table which gives light to two men, who write incessantly. Behind the man who is making the noise I see a little red light. The executioner's assistant has loosened the knots in the cords a little, which gives me a relief for which I am grateful. . . . But . . . but . . . but the assistant on the other side pulls and pulls. If he continues to pull the cords so he will cut my legs off. They bring a crucifix for me to kiss. Behind the man who turned his back on me I hear something like crackling embers, and there are small red flames which lick the stone walls. Between the two men who are writing there is a man who makes a sign. The executioner has a kind face. I sign to him for some water. I could

bear the pain better if I had not such a thirst. The executioner raises his mallet! I swear I cannot say the names which are at the end of my tongue. They will not leave me. I cannot speak! Oh! why cannot you hear them? Take them from me!"

By this time his mouth had become closed, but the lips were opened in such a way as to make it appear that he had no lips. The teeth were locked and welded together tightly. A muffled cry of suffering came from the throat, but could not escape through the closed teeth. Suddenly there was a sharp grinding, and his teeth began to break under the great pressure of that closed jaw. Pieces of teeth were scattered over the bed, and blood issued from his mouth. His horrible groaning continued, and Theophraste showed signs of weakening under the great strain.

At this horrible spectacle M. Eliphaste declared wearily that he had never assisted or suspected that he could assist at such suffering. He confessed that until to-day he had never operated on a reincarnated soul of less than five hundred years. It was obvious that in spite of all his science and all his experience the illustrious medium was nonplussed.

M. Eliphaste did not try any longer to dissimu-

late his anxiety. He could have stopped the operation there if he had had time. But they buried the wedges in so rapidly that it did not even permit him to question M. Longuet.

During this last performance M. Longuet's toothless mouth opened again. Other cries issued from it which were not like human cries at all. They were so curious and so weird that all three onlookers leaned over him, trembling with terror to see how such a cry could be made by a human mouth.

Mme. Longuet wanted to run away, but in her fright she fell. When she arose the cries had ceased. M. Eliphaste commanded her to be quiet, recalling to her with a severe look her responsibility in the operation.

M. Theophraste now reposed peacefully on his strap-mattress. That peacefulness, following immediately the horrors of such suffering, was extraordinary. He was not in pain. He remembered none of it. After the torturing was over he ceased to think of it, and consequently this was how he could reply to M. Eliphaste in the intervals of torture, in the most natural way, without physical emotion.

M. Eliphaste again began to interrogate him:  
"And now where are you, Cartouche?"

"I am still in the torture chamber. Ah! they hold me! They hold me tightly! They hold my arms! What are they going to do? The man in the center says, 'By order of the Regent we must have the names. So much the worse if he dies for it! Are the tongs ready? Begin with the breasts! . . .' Oh! Oh! The man kneeling before the burning coals gets up, making a noise with the irons. He hands the red tongs to the executioner. They uncover my right breast! Oh! Oh! It is dreadful! I cannot live through it!"

## CHAPTER XX

### *In the Charnel House*

THE recital which follows is the integral reproduction of what came out of the mouth of Theophraste while plunged in hypnotic sleep, from the moment that he submitted to the torture until he died. This part is of the highest importance, not only for the experimental spirit of science, but for history, for it destroys the legend of the wheel and shows to us, in an indisputable fashion, the real death of Cartouche. I have not found this part stored in the oaken chest, but in the papers and statements which have been read in the Spiritual Congress of 1889. It is all from M. Eliphaste's hand.

Theophraste, or, rather, Cartouche in the power of M. Eliphaste, said, "I do not know exactly what has happened to me. I have died, I have hidden the document, and I have not met a single person. When I re-opened my eyes (I had them

closed then, and I was without doubt falling from a feebleness that seemed like death) I did not recognize at first a single one of the objects which surrounded me, and I did not know the place into which they had carried me. Certainly I am no longer in the torture room, nor in my dungeon in the tower of Montgomery. Am I only in the Conciergerie again? I do not know. Where have they imprisoned me after the torture, whilst waiting for my death? Into what new prison have they thrown me? The first thing that I distinguish is a bluish light which flitters across some heavy bars which are covered with a grating. The moon visits me. It descends two or three steps. I try to make a movement, but I cannot. I am an inert thing. My will does not control my legs any longer, nor a single one of my muscles. It is as if they had severed all relations between my will and my flesh. My brain is no longer the master of seeing and comprehending. It is no longer master of my actions. My poor legs! I feel them scattered around me. I ought to have attained a degree of suffering—I kneel on one, as I have explained, so that I shall not suffer more. But where am I? . . . The moon descended two more steps, and then two more. . . . Oh! Oh! What is this that the moon lights? It is an eye! A large

eye! But the eye is empty; that large eye is empty, and the other eye at its side—which is also lighted now—is covered again with its green eyelid. I see the whole head! It had no skin on the cheeks, but it had a beard on the chin. The moon advances continuously. It halts gently in the holes of the nose. It has two holes in the nose, two on a head. . . . They threw me, then, into a common ditch! The moon shone on me. . . . I have two legs of a corpse across my stomach. I recognize those steps now, and this ditch, and this moon. . . . I am in the charnel house of Montfançon! . . . I am afraid! . . . When I went up to the Cleopimetes by the Rue des Morts on junketing days I used to look at that charnel house through the grating. I looked at it with curiosity because I already saw my carrion there, but the idea never occurred to me that when a carrion was there it could look from the other side of the grating. And now my carrion sees! They threw me there because they thought me dead, and I am buried alive, with the corpses of the persons hanged. My fate is entirely miserable and surpasses all that the imagination of men could invent! The saddest reflections assail me, and if I ask myself first of all, by what artifice of fate I am reduced to such an extremity, I

am obliged to confess that fate had nothing to do with this affair, but my pride only. I should have continued quietly to be the 'chief of all the robbers' if I had remained alive. But La Belle Laittiere was right when she said in the tavern of the Reine Margot that I was no longer fit to live. I was pleased to play the potentate, and I ended by having a mania for cutting up in pieces all those whom I suspected. My lieutenants ran more danger in serving me than in deserting me. They betrayed me, and that was logical. The beginning of my bad luck was the affair of the Luxembourg. It should have opened my eyes, but my pride hindered me from seeing clearly. This is a good time for these reflections, now that I am in the charnel house.

"I am living in the charnel house with the dead, and for the first time in my life I am afraid. But I am not afraid of the dead; I am afraid of the living, for there is one near me alive! *I know that he moves.* It is strange that at this moment, when I am upon the limit of life and death, my senses perceive things that they ignored in good health, and while my ears do not hear any more, on account of the boiling water with which they were filled, I know there is some one alive near me. Shall I be then not the only one to live in

this domain of putrefaction? I recall that the Vache-a-Paniers told me that the Count de Charalais had caused some women who had resisted him to be buried alive in the little ditches near the earthen mound of Montfançon, but I, Cartouche, have no desire to think of such a crime. I know very well that he bathes himself in the blood of young virgins whom he had killed, to cure himself of a terrible disease which ate into his flesh, but to bury women alive in ditches, that I do not believe. And yet there is on my left side a woman who moves in one of the ditches. I do not hear her, I feel her. The moon had lengthened its ray of light as far as myself. Its ray is divided into three by the bars of the grating. This makes three blue bands, by which I see, first of all, the hole of the eye, and the three holes of the nose, and then a wonderful mouth, which sticks its tongue out at me. Then there are three bodies without heads. In the left side of the third body I distinguish very plainly the putrefied wound in which was buried one of the rings from which the headless one was hanged. He could not be hanged by the neck, as he had no head. As I do not feel the woman at my side in the ditch move any more, I collect my wits a little and I employ myself in remembering the bodies which fill the

charnel house. I begin to see those which are entirely in the shadows. There are some! There are some more sounds. They bring all the executed criminals here from the city. There are some fresh ones, there are some decayed ones, there are some well preserved ones, and all dry; but the others are not presentable—they are falling into ruin. I will soon be a ruin like them. However, all is not said, all is not finished, since I exist. Hope is not dead. One finds hope even in the depths of a charnel house. Oh, if I could move! The dead men are moving! I will end by moving also. I have turned my eyes as far as it is possible in the right corner of the orbit. I have seen that the corpse which is on my stomach does not move its head. It slides on my stomach. I begin to be afraid again, not because the dead one moved—for the charnel house belongs to the dead, who do there what they wish, but because they pull the dead man by the legs. I turn my eyes in the other corner. In the left corner I saw a dead man's leg in the air. This leg ought to be held by something, pulled by something. The moon rises the length of the wall, with the leg as far as one of the holes. And my eyes look so much to the left that they see a living hand. The living hand which came out of the hole holds the

dead foot. *I feel, I know that there is a woman eating* in the ditch at the side. And now I cannot take my eyes from the hole for fear of seeing the live hand come back and seeing it reach out. But I hope on my salvation. I hope that the hand will not be long enough. Suddenly the moon ceases to light up the hole, and I turn my eyes toward the grating where the moonlight enters. Then I see between the moon and me a man on the steps of the charnel house. A living man. I am saved perhaps. I wished to cry out with joy, and I should have, perhaps, if the horror of that which I feel and know all at once had not suddenly closed my throat. *I feel, I know*, that that man has come to rob me of my bones! . . . On account of the Courtesan Emilie! . . . The Regent is remembered with the Duke of Orleans and Jean sans Peur.

“The Courtesan Emilie would not see him again. The devil meddled with the affair, and carried a bone of Cartouche, who was beloved by Emilie, to place in her bed between her chemise and her skin. I know this, my eye has read this in the heart of the man who descends the steps of the charnel house. He comes there to take my bones from me. . . . He lights a lantern. He goes straight to my corpse. He does not see, then, that the

eyes of my corpse are moving! . . . He draws out from under his cloak—a steel blade sharp and red in the rays from the lantern. He puts the lantern down, he catches me by the shoulders and leaves me half sitting against the wall, under the hole. He took my left hand with his left hand, and with his right hand he buried the steel blade in my wrist. I do not feel the blade in my wrist, but I see it. It turns around my wrist. It is going to cut it, already it has detached it. Now I commence to feel the blade! Life has come back into my wrist! Oh, yes, my wrist! . . . Oh, yes, my wrist! . . . One last blow with the blade and my left hand remains in his left hand. Oh, my poor wrist! . . . Yes! Yes! Yes! The life! The life! The life of a nerve! I tell you that it sufficed for the life of a nerve! Oh! Oh! Oh! The man howls and breaks his lantern with a kick. My hand is partly in the man's hand, but by a great miracle of the ebbing life in my wrist, my hand, at the moment it leaves my arm, has seized the hand of the man! And the man cannot rid himself of my hand, which is stiffening in death, and which holds him! Ah! he moves about, he shakes, he howls, he shakes my hand, which holds him—which holds him. He pulls my hand with his right hand, but he cannot free himself thus

of the wrist of a dead man's hand! I see him as he flees from the charnel house, howling, bounding over the steps in the moonlight like a fool, like a madman, gesticulating with my wrist.

"At this moment, above my head, a hand that I do not see, but which I feel, comes out of the wall and takes me by the hair! It pulls me, pulls me by the head. Oh, to cry out! To cry out! To cry out! But how can I cry out with those living teeth staving me in the neck and throat?"

"And now, Cartouche, where art thou?"

"I go into the darkness radiant in death."

## CHAPTER XXI

### *The Result of the Operation*

AS soon as Theophraste had pronounced these words, M. Eliphaste made a sweeping gesture with his right arm. He leaned over the prostrate form, and blew impatiently on his eyelids.

He said to him: "Awake thou, Theophraste Longuet!"

This was repeated three times, each time with greater earnestness. However, Theophraste never moved. His immobility was deathlike, and his toothless mouth and bloodless lips made the silent onlookers believe that he had followed Cartouche in the shadow of death. His corpse-like pallor seemed to them to be already turning green, and his hair, having become suddenly white, gave him the appearance of a very old man. Was he already dead? Was he decomposing already?

M. Eliphaste repeated the gestures, and in his

intense earnestness appeared like a madman. He blew again on the eyes, and parted the eyelashes, again crying out: "Theophraste Longuet, awake thou! Awake thou, Theophraste Longuet!"

Just at the moment when they believed that Theophraste Longuet would never return to life again, a slight tremble shook his frame, and drawing a deep breath, he turned his face toward them. At first he breathed with difficulty, but quickly recovering, he opened his eyes and said: "Cartouche is dead!"

M. Eliphaste's face lit up with emotion. "Let us thank God," he said, "that the operation has been successful," and he began his prayer again:

"In the beginning thou wast silent! Eon! Source of all ages! . . ."

Mme. Longuet and M. Adolphe threw themselves on Theophraste, while thanking God from the bottom of their hearts. They felt that the death of Cartouche had not been too dearly bought. The operation had certainly been a rough one, but he had only lost his teeth, and his hair had turned white. Mme. Longuet put her arms around her husband, and helped him rise from the couch. "Let us go. We have stopped here too long already," she said.

"Speak louder," said Theophraste, with strange

enunciation. "I have something in my ears. I cannot move, either."

"It is natural that you should be a little benumbed, my dear," said Mme. Longuet. "You have been stretched on that bed for a long time. But make an effort."

"Speak louder, I tell you. I can move my arms now, but I cannot stir my legs. They won't move, and my feet pain me very much."

He then put his hand to his mouth and said: "Why, what have you done with my teeth? You put me to sleep to fix my teeth, and you have taken them from me."

It was curious that while he was asleep, even after he had lost his teeth, he spoke distinctly. It was evident that he could not move, and Mme. Longuet removed the clothing to rub his stiff limbs. To her sorrow she found his clothes all torn, and on looking closer saw all the flesh on his limbs lacerated. His legs and feet were boiled. The flesh was torn away in some places, and burned horribly in others. M. Eliphaste, with trembling hands, removed the clothing from his chest, and there they saw, over the heart, two spots of black blood. His biceps bore fresh marks of frightful torture.

Mme. Longuet sobbed loudly, and sat with low-

ered head, looking at the horrible sight. Adolphe ran to get a carriage. It was evident that Theophraste could not walk or move. On his return, Theophraste was still complaining of the pain. Adolphe, with the assistance of the carriage driver, carried him out into the street. They lifted him carefully on the mattress, and walked slowly out, followed by the weeping Marceline.

M. Eliphaste prostrated himself on the ground, and with his hands clasped and elbows on the floor, cried out with a voice full of sorrow: "My beloved! My well beloved! I believed that I was Your son. Oh, my well beloved! I have taken Thy shadow for Thy light. Thou hast crushed my pride. I am in the dark, at the bottom of an abyss—I, the man of light—and I have hated it. I am only the son of silence. Eon! Source of Eon! Oh, life! To know life! To possess life!"

And thus, as they went out into the pure air, they left him praying.

## CHAPTER XXII

### *Visits to a Butcher's Shop*

**T**HEOPHRASTE'S bones were not broken, and it only took six weeks to heal, although he was obliged to keep to his bed for two months, when he regained the use of his legs. During all this time he did not make a single allusion to the past. Cartouche was dead—quite dead. The operation had been successful, although very painful. So much so, that every one dreaded that he would remain a cripple to the end of his life; but he had recovered marvelously. He had obtained a new set of teeth, and was able to speak quite plainly, but it was a more difficult thing to rid himself of the effects of the boiling water in his ears, and at times he was perfectly deaf.

After a while Theophraste thought of occupying his mind by going back into business. He had retired when young, being able to live on the income derived from several inventions which he had made for the use of rubber stamps.

However, they were all very thankful for the result, and this slight inconvenience did not worry them.

It was his habit to rise early, and after breakfast he would go out for a little walk to strengthen his legs. He soon found their old elasticity, and regained their full use. On these occasions Adolphe used to follow a short distance behind in order to watch his movements and report to M. Eliphaste.

At first he noticed nothing abnormal in his behavior, and in his report contented himself with stating this unimportant fact, that he stopped quite a while before a butcher's stall. If this had occurred only once, it would have passed the watchful Adolphe unnoticed. However, it became a regular thing for Theophraste to stand looking at the bloody meat, and spend some time talking to the butcher, a square-shouldered, florid fellow, always ready with a jest.

One day, when M. Lecamus had decided that Theophraste had spent too much time at the butcher's shop, he came up to him, as if by chance, and found him, with the butcher, decorating all the fresh meat with curl papers. This was innocent enough. Thus judged M. Eliphaste, although he wrote in the margin of the report:

"He may look at the meat in the butcher's shop. It is good to let him see blood sometimes. It is the end of the crisis, and can do no harm."

This butchery was a small one, and had its specialty. M. Houdry sold among other ordinary meats a special quality of veal. The secret of this quality lay in the way it was killed. The majority of Paris butchers obtain their meat from the abattoirs, but M. Houdry always bought his alive, and killed it himself, in his own way. He was not satisfied to knock the calf in the head, as they did at the abattoirs. He bled it after the Jewish manner, with a large knife which he called the bleeder, and so dexterous had he become in this art that he never had to cut the same wound twice. He had gained some reputation as a good butcher.

M. Houdry had explained the case about his veal to M. Longuet, with the greatest mystery, and he had evidently taken great pleasure in it—so much so that Theophraste, after having listened to the theory, had shown the desire to assist at a practical lesson. In a small court adjacent to the store, M. Houdry had a secret abattoir. On a certain morning, Theophraste, who happened there at a much earlier hour than was his custom, found his man at the abattoir with a calf. The

butcher begged him to come in, and to close the doors behind him. "I shut myself up every day thus with a live calf," said M. Houdry, "and when the doors of the abattoir are opened again, the calf is dead. I lose no time; I have operated in twenty-five minutes."

Theophraste congratulated him. He asked him many questions, interesting himself in all the objects which struck his attention. The bellows with its large arms drew his attention. He also saw a windlass. He learned that that strong oak cross-bar, with pegs in it, supported the windlass and the bucket. He admired the solid oak hand-barrow also. A chopper which was drawn up was called a "leaf." But that which interested him more was a set of tools hung on the walls in the shop. In this "shop," which was sort of saddle-bags for cutlass, he saw first of all the bleeder, and was pleased to pass his finger over the long, strong and sharpened edge. Then there was a much smaller knife, called the "Moutoniner," used ordinarily to cut up mutton, as the name indicates, but which was used there to cut certain parts of veal. Then some other small knives, among which was the canut, used in "flowering" the veal. "Flowering" the veal consists in making

light, artistic designs on the shin of the veal, as soon as it is bleached.

The first day M. Longuet received instructions about the tools. But in the following days he learned the art of the whole operation, and entered into each detail with little repugnance. He used to say, some days, in going away, jestingly: "You kill a calf every day; you must be careful, my dear M. Houdry, you see it will end by its becoming known to the other calves."

Theophraste was not idle, either. Whenever he had an opportunity he would help M. Houdry in these killings. One day the assistant did not come, and Theophraste helped rope up the calf for killing. As he was doing this, M. Houdry remarked on the evil of killing the calf by striking him on the head, as they did at the abattoir.

Theophraste declared it was a crime, and most inhuman. "It is much finer to do it with the bleeder. One blow is sufficient, and the head is off. What a fine death. How the blood flows, and with what dispatch does he die."

"Ah," said Theophraste, who had killed the calf, "see the calf's eyes, as the blood flows. How they stare at you. They are dead, but they look at you!"

"What is the matter with the calf's eyes?"

demand M. Houdry. "They are like the rest. Ah, you think it is a joke? Well, well, you are not so used to it as I."

M. Houdry then prepared the meat for selling, and while he was doing so Theophraste took the head, cleaned it and cut out the eyes. The sight of the blood had excited him beyond control, and M. Houdry was amused when he desired to take the head and feet home with him.

In parting he said: "Au revoir, M. Houdry, au revoir. I will take the head away with me, but I leave you the eyes. I do not like eyes to stare at me. You must not laugh at me, though. You do not understand me. However, it is my affair, and you must be glad that you are not afraid of dead eyes staring at you."

And so he returned home, and when he appeared at the door of his house with the calf's head under his arm, Adolphe and Marceline smiled, saying: "He is amusing himself with some innocent prank."

## CHAPTER XXIII

### *A Newspaper Report*

IT had become their habit in the Longuet flat to play dominoes in the evening. M. Adolphe was a good player, and always he used the Norman provincial names. When he played the double six, he would call the "double negro"; the five was "the dog that bites," and so on. Marceline was always amused by these terms, and was always ready to play.

It happened on this particular evening that Theophraste lost his game, and after a short argument he began to sulk, and refused to play more. Seating himself in a chair near the window, he began reading the paper. He had strong political opinions.

Suddenly he was attracted by a strange headline. He read it and re-read it, and could not resist an exclamation. "Strange! Is not Car-touche dead, then?"

He could not help smiling. This hypothesis was so absurd. Then he ran over the first lines of the article and said: "My dear Adolphe, have you read this article? 'Is not Cartouche dead, then?' It is a strange, a surprising article."

Adolphe and Marceline could hardly prevent a start, and looked at him with uneasiness.

Theophraste began to read the article aloud, as follows:

"For some days the police have been occupying themselves with one of the greatest of mysteries that have occurred in Paris, and with a series of odd crimes. They are endeavoring to hide from the public the most curious sides. Those crimes and the manner in which their perpetrator escapes from the police at the moment they think they have him, recall, point by point, the manner in which the celebrated Cartouche committed his crimes. If he was not enacting a thing so reprehensible, one could admire the perfect art with which the model is imitated. It is Cartouche to a finish! The police themselves have never dealt with a more mysterious bandit. Nevertheless, the administration, very mysteriously, but, we admit, very intelligently, has sent by some of them an abstract of Cartouche's history, compiled from the manuscripts of the National Libraries. They

thought, subtly, that the history of Cartouche would be useful to them, not only in the present task, which is to prevent the criminal outrages of the new Cartouche, and to arrest him, but also that Cartouche's history ought to form a part of the general instruction to all the agents of police.

“‘Finally the news was brought to us that M. Lepine, Prefect of Police, has ordered them to devote several evenings in the Prefecture to listen to lectures on the authentic history of the illustrious bandit.’

“‘What do you say to that?’ demanded Theophraste with merriment. “It is a merry farce, and the journalists are great fellows to issue such fibs.”

Neither Adolphe nor Marceline smiled. Marceline's voice trembled slightly when she begged Theophraste to continue. He began to read again quietly:

“‘The first crime of the new Cartouche did not at all present the horror that we shall find in some of the others. It was a polite crime. Let us say at once that all the crimes of which we have any knowledge, and which they attribute to the new Cartouche, have been accomplished in the last fifteen days, at the North, and always from

eleven o'clock in the evening to four o'clock in the morning.' ”

Mme. Longuet rose, very pale. M. Lecamus made her sit down again, by a knowing *shake* of the head, and commanded her to be silent.

Theophraste said: “What is this that they want to tell with their new Cartouche? As for me, I only know the old one. After all, let's see the gallant polite crime,” and he read it over more and more calmly:

“ ‘A pretty woman, well known in Paris, where her literary salon is frequented by all those who interest themselves with debates and with matters spiritualistic, was proceeding, toward morning, with her toilette for bed, and preparing to take a well-earned rest, following the fatigue which had wearied her that evening there with the disorder of a conference at home of the most illustrious of our pneumatics, when suddenly the casement of her balcony was opened quickly by a man with a figure a little over the medium, still young and vigorous (this last is in the report of the police), but with perfectly white hair. He had in his hand a brilliant nickel revolver.

“ ‘ “Madame,” said he to the terrified woman, “compose yourself. I do not wish to do you any evil. Consider me the most humble of your serv-

ants. My name is Louis Dominique Cartouche, and I have no other ambition than to sup at your side. By the tripes of Mme. de Phalaris, I have the hunger of all the devils!" and he began to laugh.

"Mme. de B.—let us call her Mme. de B.—believed that she was dealing with a crazy man, but he declared he was only determined to take supper with her, which peculiar favor he had long desired. That man was much more dangerous than a crazy man, for it might be necessary to kill him on account of the brilliantly nickeled revolver.

"Go," said the man, "and call your people, and tell them to bring here to you a good supper. Do not give them a single explanation which would be likely to cause me any embarrassment or trouble, for if you do you will be a dead woman."

"Mme. de B. then took her departure, for she was brave, with a mind sufficiently elevated to enable her to face the most unexpected adventures. She rang for the chambermaid, and a quarter of an hour later the man with the white hair and Mme. de B. were seated opposite each other in proper style, and apparently the best of friends. The supper was prolonged through the night (we

do not wish to affirm anything as to this point, which is so interesting—but are a little skeptical as to the veracity of this story), so that the man did not descend by the sheet from the balcony until about sunrise. The beautiful Mme. de B. had not had supper, and so she did not complain about that forced supper, which she ended by partaking of in very good grace, nor had she seen the necessity of reporting her adventure to the Police Commissioner. And we see what the circumstances were. Some days later the Commissioner was announced at Mme. de B.'s. He told her that the ring that she wore on her finger, in which a magnificent diamond glittered, was the property of Mlle. Emily de Bescancon. Mme. de B. was of course ignorant of its value—or where it came from. It had been presented to her. But Mlle. Emily de Besancon, who had seen it on the finger of Mme. de B. the day before at a charity sale, claimed it formally as hers. She had furnished all sorts of proofs of it, and the diamond was set in such a unique way that there could be no doubt of it. Mme. de B. was infinitely troubled, and was obliged to relate the adventure which had befallen her. She spoke of the unknown, of the balcony, of the supper, of the gratitude he had shown her for his supper, and his placing the

magnificent diamond on her finger, which he had obtained, he said, from a woman he had loved very much, a Mme. de Phalaris, who had been dead for some time. Mme. de B. could not be suspected. She furnished a proof—the nickel-plated revolver that the unknown had left on the table that night. Finally she begged the Commissioner of Police to take away from her house the hundred bottles of champagne of every choice brand that the unknown had sent to her the day after the eventful night, under the pretext that the supper had been exquisite, and that the only thing that could have been desired was champagne. She feared that the champagne, as well as the ring, had been stolen. The Commissioner acquitted the beautiful Mme. de B. He could do nothing at the time, the news being in everybody's mouth, as the world at large would henceforth interest itself in the new Cartouche.

“This little adventure, which is the least important of those we have to relate, is the reproduction of what happened on the night of the 13th of July, 1721, at the house of Mme. la Marechale de Boufflers. She also was occupied in making her toilette. The young man, who came unexpectedly by way of the balcony, had no revolver in his hand, but he carried six English pistols. He demanded

supper after presenting himself as Louis Dominique Cartouche, and the widow of Louis François, Duke of Boufflers, peer and Marshal of France, one of the heirs of Lille and of Malplaquet, supped with Cartouche, and late at night.

“Cartouche only complained of the champagne, and Mme. de Boufflers received a hundred bottles of it the next day. She had them taken, by her butler Patapon, into the cellars of a great financier.

“Some time after that one of Cartouche’s bands stopped an equipage in the streets of Paris. Cartouche leaned into the carriage to recognize the faces. It was Mme. la Marechale de Boufflers. He turned toward his people. “Give them liberty to pass on, now and always, Mme. de la Marechale de Boufflers!” ordered he in a ringing voice, and he bowed very low to the Marechale, after he had slipped on her finger a magnificent diamond that he had probably stolen from Mme. de Phalaris. *Mme. de Phalaris never saw it again.*

“Now let us pass on to the crime in the Rue du Bac.”

## CHAPTER XXIV

### *The Murder in the Rue Guenegaud*

MARCELINE got up as much to hide her feelings as to find out if the nickel-plated revolver was in its usual place in the drawer. Upon her return she was greatly agitated, and told them that the revolver had been removed.

Theophraste advised her to calm herself, saying there was nothing of importance in that; and he proceeded to read about the crime in the Rue du Bac, saying that the journalist who wrote the narrative was more intelligent, and had made his report more interesting than the first one.

“However,” said he, “there are a few inaccuracies and omissions in his narrative. According to him one is led to think that Cartouche indulged in amorous proceedings with Mme. de Bithigne after supper. However, such a thing should not be allowed to get abroad, as no such thing happened. He had no other intention than to take supper with the lady.

"Why, my dear Marceline, if I had intended otherwise, my reputation would have suffered, and Mme. la Marechale de Boufflers would have scorned me when I met her on July 13th, 1721.

"These gentlemen also relate that I outraged Mme. la Marechale de Boufflers. This is all wrong. I am very fond of her on account of her intellect, and our intercourse was most polite, as well as virtuous. If they had only studied more, these journalists would have known that Madame in 1721 was over sixty years old, and I dare say Cartouche knew many younger women to play such tricks on."

Theophraste then took up the paper:

"The history of the Rue du Bac is much more simple. The Prefect of Police had received a note which ran: "If you dare, come and find me; I am always at the inn in the Rue du Bac, with Bernard." It was signed "Cartouche." The thing had occurred after Mme. de Bithigne had told her story. The Prefect thought over his case and laid his plans.

"That same evening, a quarter of an hour after midnight, half a dozen policemen raided the tavern in the Rue du Bac. They were met on the stairs by a man, who, although still young, had perfectly white hair. He was endowed with

almost superhuman strength, and, on seeing the police, he picked up a chair near by and started striking them. Three of them were stunned, and the others only just had time to drag the prostrated bodies of their companions into the street to prevent them from being burned by a fire started on the first landing by this man with white hair. The man saved himself by jumping from roof to roof over spaces more than thirty feet high.

“‘The new Cartouche,’ continued Theophraste, amid the scared silence of Marceline and M. Lecamus, ‘the new Cartouche has taken possession of the Rue Guenegaud. Several days ago they found in a vault-like passage there under the floor the body of a young doctor, who had been active at the death of Mme. de Bardinoldi, the mystery of which had baffled the police and press. The police had not confided to any one the fact that pinned to the young doctor’s tunic was a card on which some one had written in pencil: “We will meet each other in the other world, M. de Traneuse.” This was without doubt a crime of the new Cartouche, for the old one did in fact assassinate at this place an engineer named Traneuse. Cartouche had knocked him on the head with a stick, and the

young doctor had had his skull fractured with a blunt instrument.' ”

Theophraste laid down the paper, and, looking at Adolphe and Marceline, remarked that they both looked as if they were expecting a like catastrophe.

“Why, my dear Adolphe,” said he, “it is ridiculous for you to be angry at such pleasantries. I take the opportunity of telling you that I often frequent the Rue Guenegaud. That history of M. de Traneuse was to me the beginning of one of the prettiest farces that ever I played with M. d’Argenson’s spies. Following the death of M. de Traneuse (who had allowed some very improper talk about me), I was followed by two patrols of the guard, who covered me and rendered all resistance impossible. But they were ignorant that I was Cartouche, and satisfied themselves by conducting me to the Ford l’Avegne, which was the easiest prison in Paris. In this prison they put debtors, drunks, and disorderly people, and the people who have not paid their fines. They were sure that they had taken Cartouche on the 10th of January, but on the evening of the 9th Cartouche had made his escape, and took the direction of his police. It was time, for everybody was now searching the streets of Paris.

“My dear Marceline, and my dear Adolphe, you look as if you were at a funeral. That article does not lose its quota of a certain amount of wit. At first I thought it only the jest of a cheap journalist, but I see now that it is very serious, believe me. Wait for the history of the calf! Ah! We have not done yet with the affair of the Petits Augustines! Listen!”

Theophraste picked up his paper, adjusted his gold spectacles, and began again:

“That which was the most extraordinary in this adventure was that several times during light days they have been on the point of capturing this modern Cartouche, and that he always escaped just as the other did, by way of the chimneys. History teaches us that the true Cartouche designed on the 11th of June, 1721, to sack the Hotel Desmarets, Rue des Petits Augustines. It was one of his men, Le Ratichon, who had given him the idea. But Cartouche and Le Ratichon had been imprisoned by the police. As soon as Cartouche was in the house, the bailiffs hastened there and the place was invaded. He tranquilly closed the doors of the salons and extinguished the lights, undressed himself, climbed into the chimney, descended by another way into the kitchen, where he found a scullion, killed the scullion, dis-

guised himself with the dead man's clothes, and went out in fine form from the hotel, killing two bailiffs with two pistol shots because they asked him news of Cartouche. Well, what will you say when you know that our Cartouche was surrounded the day before yesterday in a confectioner's shop in a quarter of the Augustines, escaped by the chimney, after having put on over all his effects, to prevent soiling them, the pastry cook's blouse, which had been found on the roofs, also his pantaloons. As to the pastry cook, they found him half buried in his bake oven. But, before putting him there, as a humane precaution, the murderer, Cartouche, had assassinated him.' ”

Here Theophraste, interrupting himself again, cried:

“Previously, previously. I had previously assassinated him. . . . But why do you fly into the corners? Are you afraid? Let us see, my dear Adolphe, my dear Marceline, a little coolness—you will need it for the history of the calf.”

## CHAPTER XXV

### *The Calf's Revenge*

NEVER had Mme. Longuet or M. Lecamus been so upset before at the reading of a newspaper. The account of the atrocious murder did not seem to disturb Theophraste a bit. When he came to the part where Cartouche had placed the baker in the bake oven, Mme. Longuet groaned and could not sit still. M. Lecamus was no less disturbed, and they both rose and looked to Theophraste in amazement.

He then began to read the account of M. Houdry's calf:

"M. Houdry was a head butcher on one of the small streets. Everybody came to him to buy veal, which was his specialty. This report explained itself by a fact so unusual that we can believe it only on the affirmation of M. le Commissioner of Police Mifroid, who conducted the first inquest. We know that all the butchers of

Paris get their meat from the abattoirs. It was against the law for them to kill anything at home.'

"That is accurate," said Theophraste, "that is exactly right; M. Houdry explained that to me several times, and the confidence that he placed in me by telling me the mystery of his abattoir astonished me not a little. Why should he confide to me a fact which was not known to his wife, his private clerk, a foundling whom he considered as one of the family, and his brother-in-law, who brought the calf to him each night? Why? Ah! No one knows. Perhaps it was because he couldn't help it. You know very well that no one can escape his fate. As for me, I said to him: 'Take care, you might end by being one of the calves!' I resume my reading: 'That calf was brought to him secretly each night by his brother-in-law, and as his abattoir was on a little court, behind which was the open country, no one ever saw a live calf at M. Houdry's.

"The inquest will tell us from whence the calf came. M. Mifroid, the Commissioner of Police, has decided to sift the matter to the bottom, and penetrate the whole mystery.

"It appears that M. Houdry had his special way of killing his calf, a way that gave quality

to the veal. He used to cut the calf's throat with a bleeder.'

"Is it necessary for me," said Theophraste, "to show you what a bleeder is?"

Going to the drawer of the sideboard, he took out the carving knife, and while explaining that a bleeder was twice as large as that, he passed it up and down M. Lecamus' face to make him understand the method of killing the calf. He tried to get M. Lecamus to hold the knife, but by this time he was too frightened, and had retreated into a corner of the room, fearing that Theophraste would do something violent. However, he laughed at their temerity and sat down to read the further account.

"Yesterday, leaving early, monsieur shut himself in his abattoir as usual with his calf. He was aided by his clerk in tying the calf to the hanger. The calf being tied, the clerk busied himself in rinsing the casks before the abattoir, which the butcher always kept shut when killing.

"Ordinarily, M. Houdry took from twenty to thirty minutes to kill his calf, gut it and bleach it. Thirty-five minutes passed, and the double doors of the abattoir were not opened. The clerk, who had finished rinsing, noticed it with the greatest astonishment. Often M. Houdry had called

him to scald the head, scrape the hairs off, and clean the ears. That particular day his master did not call him. Meanwhile, Mme. Houdry, the butcher's wife, appeared at the door of the court.

“ “What is the matter there?” she asked. “Is he not finished yet?”

“ “It is true, madame, he is a very long time.”

“ “Then she called, “Houdry! Houdry!” No response. She crossed the court and opened the abattoir door. The calf immediately escaped, and began gracefully jumping around her. She looked at the calf at once with emotion, for at that time the calf should have been dead. Then she struck a single blow on the double door, and called again to her husband, who did not answer her. She turned toward the clerk. “M. Houdry is not there,” she said. “Are you sure he has not gone out?”

“ “Oh, madame, I am perfectly sure of it. He has not come out and no one has gone in. I have not left the court,” replied the clerk, springing at the calf's head as it continued running around. “I am sure he is there. He is just hiding to frighten you.”

“ “It will be better to hide the calf. Houdry! Houdry!”

“ “The clerk, with a turn of the halter, had tied

the calf. Entering with Mme. Houdry he uttered a cry of surprise and said: "Oh, that is queer! When we came in there was only one calf, a single calf, madame, a calf which was tied to the hanger, and which gambols in the court now, and here is another calf on the crossbeam." Yes, indeed, there was another calf on the tincl.

" " "I see it now," said Mme. Houdry. "What a small calf! But you are foolish; there should be two calves."

" " "Never, madame, never."

" " "Well, you see perfectly the calf on the beam?"

" "The little clerk and Mme. Houdry drew near to the beam, which was in the shadow, and how astonished they were to see the kind of white meat which was hanging from the beam. They had never seen such white meat, and this meat was arranged exactly like the calf's. They accounted for this finally by deciding that it was not veal meat.

" " "What a curious calf," the clerk continued to repeat.

" " "It is not a small calf," said Mme. Houdry. "No! no!"

" " "All the same, madame, they have decorated the skin on the stomach with the lancet. See!

What pretty patterns! There are two hearts, some arrows, some flowers. . . . Ah! those beautiful flowers." The clerk raised up the lungs from which hung the heart.

" " "It is a beautiful pluck," said he, "and has not been truffled. The heart is good."

" " "Yes, he had a good heart!" groaned Mme. Houdry, who was all at once terrified at what she had said.

" "Thereupon the clerk began to weep, and without knowing why, dipped his hands in a pail of cold water which was placed beside the boiler, looking for the head of the animal, and he drew out a head. But when she saw the head, Mme. Houdry fainted, for she had recognized the head of her husband.

" "Mme. Houdry had immediately recognized her husband's head, and the clerk himself examined it more closely, to be sure that it was the head of his master. It was a well-cut head—well refined, well scalded, well scraped. The moustache and hair had been shaved, as they should be, and but for something unforeseen, if need be, the head of the butcher would have passed for the head of a calf.

" "The clerk in his turn fainted, and let the head of M. Houdry roll away.

“Some minutes later the tragedy was discovered, judging from the disturbance in the quarter.”

“The journalist,” said Theophraste, “was not of the opinion that the calf had decapitated the butcher, and that also was put before Cartouche’s name—that poor Cartouche.” He shrugged his shoulders once more, and then, having raised his eyes above the paper, he sought in the two corners of the dining-room, where M. Lecamus and his wife had taken refuge. They had disappeared. He called them and they did not answer. He tried to open the door of the landing, and it would not open. He then rushed to the chimney, which was large enough for him to get up, and scaled it with the same facility as he had descended the chimney when the boiler was beginning to boil at M. Houdry’s, the same morning that he had decapitated that unfortunate man.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### *Theophraste Again Hears of His Treasures*

THE clamber over the roofs of the Rue Gerondo on a cold rainy night had a physical and moral effect on Theophraste. He had taken cold and was suffering in consequence. From a moral point of view it had made him change his whole view of these events. While he had been reading the accounts of these crimes with which the new Cartouche had been terrifying Paris, he had shown a callous indifference, but now he commenced to hold himself responsible for many of the atrocities, and especially for the murder of M. Houdry, which he had before facetiously blamed on the calf.

He often recalled nocturnal visits by the route he was now following, and several bloody crimes came back to his memory, disgusting him, and making him weep bitter tears of useless remorse.

It was, however, too late. In spite of all his

sufferings, in spite of M. de la Nox's invocations, and the torture they had submitted him to, Cartouche was not dead.

And that evening, then, like many other criminal evenings, he led his damned soul over the roofs of Paris. He wept. He cursed that mysterious, irresistible force, which from the depths of centuries commanded him to kill. He cursed the influence which made him kill. He thought of his wife—of Adolphe. He bitterly regretted the hours of passed happiness between those two beings so dear to him. He excused them for running away. He pardoned them for their terror. He resolved never again to trouble their peaceful days with his bloody incoherencies. "Let me disappear," he said to himself. "Let me hide my shame and my original defect in the midst of the desert. They will forget me. I shall forget myself. Let me profit by these logical moments, when my brain, released momentarily from the Other, discusses, weighs, deduces, and concludes and sees in the present."

It was not Cartouche who spoke, it was Theophraste, who cried to Cartouche: "Let us fly! Since I love Marceline, let us fly! Since I love Adolphe, let us fly! One day they will be happy without me! There is no longer happiness with

me! Adieu! adieu! Marceline, adored woman, faithful wife! Farewell, Adolphe, precious, consoling friend! Farewell! Theophraste tells you farewell!" He wept. Then he said aloud: "I come, Cartouche!"

Then he plunged into the darkness, going from gutter to gutter, from roof to roof, sliding from high walls with safety, protected, like a somnambulist, by Providence.

And now who is that man who, with his head lowered, his back curved, his hands in his pockets, swayed like a poor wretch in the wind and rain which fell profusely all the tedious way? He followed the road which skirts the railroad. It is a straight road, bordered by small, weak trees, plain common broom-straw—sad ornaments for a departmental road—running along the side of the railroad. Whence comes this man, with his hands in his pockets, or, rather, this shade of a man? The plain extends to the right and the left without an undulation, without the rising of a hillock, without the hollow of a riser. All this can be seen, for this is not a night scene; it is broad daylight, on the track, straight on by the side of the road.

Trains pass each other from time to time, local trains, fast trains, freight trains, rattling along

with an occasional ceasing when one hears in the wind the ting, ting, ting of the bell of the disks at the station. There is one station before, and one behind. They are small stations, and are five kilometers apart. Between the two stations there is a straight double track, but no viaduct, no tunnel, no bridge, not even a culvert.

As I said before, from whence came the sad shade of a man?

It is Theophraste. He has resolved to fly—no matter where—far from his wife.

After a night passed from gutter to gutter, not knowing where to direct his steps, and not caring at all, he goes into a railway station. He gets into a train without a ticket, gets out of the train at another station.

How often does it happen that the control registers of railway stations are badly made on account of the number of travelers.

Behold him, then, on the road at the entrance of a village which follows the railroad track. And who is it that watches him as he crosses the threshold of a little house at the entrance of a village?

Mme. Petitot herself!

It was the first time that Mme. Petitot had seen M. Longuet since he cut off the ears of her husband. Upon seeing him, Mme. Petitot became

highly indignant, and commenced upbraiding Theophraste.

After all sorts of imprecations—the result of the barbarity of Theophraste—Mme. Petito informed Theophraste that Signor Petito had found the treasures of the Chopinettes, that he had put them in a safe place, and that the treasures were the richest on earth, treasures which were worth more than two ears. They were as good as the ears of Signor Petito, and so they were quits.

Theophraste, in the course of this discourse, found it difficult to say very much, but this did not disturb him. He was glad of the anger of Mme. Petito, for having furnished him with such valuable information, and he said: “I have found my treasures, for I have found Signor Petito again.”

Mme. Petito burst into satanic laughter.

“Signor Petito,” she exclaimed, “is in the train.”

“In which train?”

“In the train which will pass under your very nose! It will carry my husband beyond the frontier. Get in, then, my dear monsieur; climb in if you wish to speak to him. But hurry, for he passes by in an hour, and they do not distribute tickets at the next station,” and her laugh became more satanic still, so much so that Theophraste

almost wished that he was deaf again. He saluted her and walked away rapidly along the railroad track. When he was alone he said: "Come, come! I must get some information about my treasures from Signor Petito himself. But how? He is in the train which will pass under my nose. . . ."

## CHAPTER XXVII

### *The Express Train's Disappearance*

IT is necessary now for us to relate the extraordinary events which happened on the railway. At this part of the track, which is double, there were two stations about four miles apart, through which the express trains ran quite frequently. In the evening after Theophraste had been speaking to Mme. Petito, the express train had passed through the first station, and the station master was waiting for the signal from the second station, when suddenly a message came through saying that the train had not arrived yet. The station master could not understand it. The train had passed through his station fifteen minutes before, and would not have taken all that time to go the short distance to the other station. He went out and looked up the track. There was no sign of the train, and all was quiet. Again the signal came back, and the second station master

said that he would walk along the track to see if he could find the cause of the delay. The first man said he would do the same, and they both started running down the track, followed by other men in the stations. Although it was broad daylight, nothing could be seen of the train, and the two parties met on the track. The first station master was greatly agitated, and wrung his hands in despair. He knew the train had passed through his station. He was sure of it. The report of his assistant confirmed it. Where could it have disappeared to? The excitement and fear was too much for him, and without any warning he fell dead at their feet with heart failure.

The men ran hither, thither, on both sides of the tracks, but no sign of the train was there. At last they gave up the search, and placing the dead body of the station master on a rough bier of sticks and leaves, they made their way sadly back to the station.

They had not gone far when one of the party cried out: "Look ahead, there's the train!"

And there, a few yards outside the station, on the very track they had traveled on, was a wagon and baggage car of the disappeared train!

They were all very astonished, and were running, shouting, toward the train, when they sud-

denly stopped. Peering out of the doors of the train was a peculiar head. It had no ears, and appeared as though the door had been shut violently, catching the man's neck. They called to him as soon as they saw him, but he did not answer. The head just swayed from one side to the other, rocked by the wind, which was blowing in great gusts. Upon the head was curly hair, and the cravat around the white neck was untied, floating in the wind.

On approaching, they saw the door of the coach was covered with blood, and on examination saw that the man's head was held to the door by a piece of rag. He had evidently opened the door and poked his head out, when somebody must have shut the door again and decapitated him. The two men who carried the dead body of the station master uttered a cry of dismay, and placing their burden on the track, made an examination of the trucks. They found no one in the first one, and opening the door of the second, found that it was empty save for the dead man's body, which had been stripped of all its clothing.

The news of this fantastic horror spread rapidly in the villages on the road, and an enormous crowd gathered at the little station.

The police were sent for, but they were unable

to get any clue as to who the strange man was, or where the train with all its travelers had gone to.

They were, however, very quiet about it, and only at the inquest did the facts become known.

As it has been said, the tracks between these stations contained no bridge or tunnel, but ran through a flat, desolate country, marked by no hills. The only thing to break the line of the track was a short side line which ran into a dis-used quarry, which had been used as a sand quarry by a glassmaker. This had been abandoned many years ago, and had not been used since.

On looking at the plan one would at once think that the presence of this branch line was an explanation of the train disaster. But this was not so, as subsequent events will prove. In fact, so simple a solution of the problem would soon have been discovered by the station men.

Wandering along the road which followed the track, Theophraste had noticed the little side track, and he had seen that the switch had been left unlocked. This would have had no significance to him before he had the interview with Mme. Petito, but now he saw an excellent opportunity of getting at Signor Petito, who was on the train. He of course could not get on the train while it

was in motion. He would open the switch and wait for the train to come up. The engineer would be sure to see it and stop his train. Here was his opportunity.

This was simple enough, and he did as he intended. He turned the switch, and, going along the track, hid behind the bushes to await the express. He waited and waited for a long time, but no express came. He became impatient, and looked up and down the track, hoping to hear it, or see its smoke.

However, after half an hour, he rose, and, although tired of waiting, went down the track to see what had happened. He had gone about half the distance to the station, when he met a train-fitter who was going along the track to look for the train. Asking him what had become of the train, he turned back up the line, and arriving at the point where he had been hiding, he discovered the baggage car and carriage which were to be found a few minutes later by the trainmen from the station.

In his astonishment he asked how they could have got there without passing him. He had not left the track, so it could not have passed him.

Suddenly he saw the head of a man at the carriage door; the head had no ears, and so he quickly

recognized it as that of Signor Petito. He climbed up into the carriage, all excitement, and searching the carriage, suddenly had an idea. He would disguise himself in Signor Petito's clothes! He quickly undressed, and stripping the dead body of all its clothes put them on, and tied his own up in a bundle. He then descended from the carriage, and fumbling in the pockets of the dead man's clothes, drew out an old pocketbook. He became feverishly excited as he searched through the papers, seeking some trace of his treasures. But he found nothing, and he found it difficult to hide his disappointment, for Signor Petito had carried the secret of the treasure to the grave.

Mme. Petito was unable to give him any information, for soon after hearing of her husband's death she became insane, and remained so to the end of her days.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### *Not To Be Explained!*

AS Theophraste was searching through the pocketbook of Signor Petito, he had wandered unconsciously away from the track into the fields. Upon returning, he was astonished to find the carriage had disappeared. He looked up and down the track, but could find no trace of it. Which was the most astonishing, the disappearance or the apparition of the train? He could not make it out, and the events had thrown him into a state bordering on prostration.

He went down the track, examined the switch, and put it back in its original position and locked it, taking the key with him.

He walked on to the upper station, but with the exception of the signalman everybody had gone out in search of the train. He interrogated him, but could only learn that the train had been reported but never came.

Theophraste insisted. "They certainly did report the express to you from the preceding station?"

"Yes, sir. I am certain. Look at my signal. It is still put to allow the train to pass. The station master and all the men of the station preceding saw the express pass and telegraphed to us. In short, monsieur, you see my little yellow arm. A catastrophe between the preceding station and this one is not possible; there is not a single bridge or viaduct. I was mounted on the ladder that you see leaning against that great vat. From there one can see the whole line, as far as the other station. I saw our people gesticulating on the line, but did not see the train."

"Strange, very strange!"

"Yes, indeed. You must trust my little yellow arm."

"Inexplicable."

"There is nothing more inexplicable."

"There are things more inexplicable still than that which have happened."

"What, then?"

"A carriage without a locomotive appeared and disappeared, and no one could tell from whence it came. It disappeared, as it appeared. . . . Did you

not see a carriage with a man at the door pass by here?"

"Monsieur," said the signalman angrily, "you mock me! You are exaggerating because you do not believe the story of the express which did not come. But look, monsieur, at my signal; that is proof enough. It cannot make a mistake."

M. Longuet replied to the signalman: "If you did not see the express, neither did I."

In that "neither did I" commenced the inward thoughts of M. Longuet, who went away in Signor Petito's clothes. M. Longuet had an idea. His misfortune was so extreme and so incurable that he resolved to die for the others. With a little cunning this was possible, since he had reclothed himself in Signor Petito's clothes. Nothing would hinder him from leaving his on the bank of the first river he came to.

This would constitute a suicidal act, according to the law.

M. Longuet was moved to the thought of addressing a letter to Marceline and Adolphe. On the banks of what river would he put his clothes? How could he re-enter Paris? However, these thoughts passed through his head momentarily, for there was only one thing which was really of

importance to him, and that was the explanation of the disappearance of the train.

This explanation was given to Theophraste by M. Mifroid, under the circumstances which we shall now report.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### *M. Milford Recognizes Cartouche*

AT midnight an artisan was singing in a square in Paris, at the side of the ancient Quarter d'Enfer, the hymn which several months later became so popular, the "International." That artisan was working with several companions repairing the track, which had sustained certain damages, following the construction of a new drain. The track was bent in certain places, and even a house in that situation, a heavy new house of seven stories, was leaning. The city engineers were much concerned by this state of affairs. They knew that in this quarter the catacombs projected their innumerable tunnels, their thousands of drains, and that certain buildings were in a very precarious state.

There are ancient Gallic-Roman quarries under those tottering walls, and so they determined on some work to make these houses secure.

The day which interests us saw the end of this work. The artisan who sang the "International" had, with his companions, completed the stopping of a hole in the subterranean vault that they had previously strengthened with very heavy pillars, several meters high.

It was just about twilight when they relinquished their work, and the workman who sang the "International" had almost finished stopping up the hole at that hour.

At the same hour, not far away on the square, in front of an electrical lamp store, a few people stood about on the pavement, and M. Mifroid was buying a few lamps for his men. He had paid for them and was just leaving the store with his package, when he saw in front of the store a young man with white hair. He was so taken aback that he slipped into his pockets, without having paid for them, several electrical lamps. Always courageous, M. Mifroid bounded toward the man, crying: "It is Cartouche!" He had recognized him, for since the revenge of the calf, all the commissioners of police had the portrait of Cartouche in their pockets. We should add that Mme. Longuet herself, and M. Lecamus, immediately after the reading relative to the calf, had shut M. Longuet up, with the design of sending

an urgent communication to the nearest Commissariat.

Then M. Mifroid, who had known our hero as Theophraste, when he had dined with him, and who recognized him as Cartouche, cried out in bounding toward him: "It is Cartouche!"

Theophraste had known for days what the police wanted with him, and when he saw Mifroid and heard the words "It is Cartouche!" he said to himself: "It is time for me to get out of this." And he ran down the street.

The commissioner ran on behind him, and was just grabbing him by the collar, when they both fell down the hole which the workman was filling.

The man had left for a few minutes to drink with his companions at the saloon near by, and on his return he completed his work, not knowing that the two men had fallen, and so they were imprisoned.

## CHAPTER XXX

### *M. Mifroid's Theory*

WHEN M. Mifroid recovered sufficiently from the shock of his fall, the first thing that worried him was that he would be "out of the game." Even at the moment of his fall his presence of mind did not fail him, and he knew that he was falling into one of the thousand-year-old quarries, which crossed under Paris in their intricate meanderings. He experienced that feeling accompanied by a light, painful torpor which follows a swoon caused by shock.

He was in the catacombs!

His first thought was to try and find the lights which he had just bought, and so find out how the passage lay. He felt sure that they must have fallen through the hole with him. The darkness seemed to weigh heavily on his eyelids, and a great feeling of depression came over him. Without getting up, for by an imprudent move-

ment he would lose the knowledge of the exact place where he had fallen, he spread his hands about him and was relieved to find his package again. He feared at first that the lamps would be broken, but soon felt that it was not so; and breaking open the package, he pressed the button on one of the lamps. The cavern was lighted with a fairy brightness, and he could not keep from smiling as he thought of the unfortunates who, shut up in some cavern, generally drag themselves along, holding their breath, behind a paltry snuff of a candle, which at any moment might flicker out.

He got up then and examined the vault. He knew of the work of repairing the track, and knew that they neared the end, but when he saw that the hole through which he had fallen was closed, a feeling akin to fear came over him.

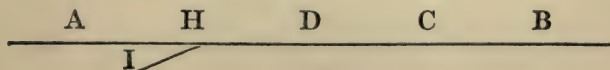
Now some meters of earth separated him from the outside world, unless it was possible for him to get up to this place which they had filled in. He, however, flashed his light around, and after surveying the walls and the vaults, he came across a prostrate body. The sight at first gave him a shock, but on examination he found it to be the body of M. Longuet—the body of the new Cartouche. He examined it and noticed that it did not

near a single trace of serious wounds. The man was stunned, as he had been himself, and without doubt he would not be slow in coming out of that swoon. He recalled that M. Lecamus had presented him to his friend in the Champs Elysées, and behold, he was now mixed up with him like the worst kind of assassins.

Just then M. Longuet breathed a sigh, stretched his arm, and complained of some pains. He arose, and, saluting M. Mifroid, asked him where they were. M. Mifroid told him. He did not seem at all distressed, but drawing forth his portfolio, he traced some lines which resembled a plan, and showed them to M. Mifroid, saying:

"M. le Commissioner, we are at the bottom of the catacombs. It is an extraordinary event. How we are going to get out I do not know, but that which is distressing me most at the present moment is what has happened to the express train."

M. Mifroid demanded some explanation, and M. Longuet related to him, with the closest detail, the disappearance and re-appearance of the carriage and the train. For the better understanding of the track he drew a plan out as follows:



This he showed to M. Mifroid.

He explained how the train had disappeared between A and B. How he had turned the switch at H and waited at D for the train to pass on to the side track. He described how the train had never come, and how the carriage had appeared and disappeared.

M. Mifroid became greatly interested, and begged him to repeat the story. "And when did this happen?" asked he. "It has not yet been reported to me."

"It happened several hours ago," said Theophraste, "and it should have been reported by now."

M. Mifroid examined the plan for about five minutes, and after reflecting for a while, asked Theophraste a few questions. Suddenly he burst out laughing and said: "Why, what a difficult problem. I have solved it in five minutes."

"You said there were five men at A and five men at B. It passes through B, but not A. You were at D, and because you did not see, it did not pass? Consequently, your train vanished. Well, I say the train exists between A and B, and must be somewhere between B and I, that is sure; the train is in the sandhill."

"I swear not!" said Theophraste. "I was at

D expecting the train, and I did not leave the track."

"It can be nowhere else, for five men saw it pass B and the five men at A are equally certain it didn't pass them. Therefore I say that as only you were at D it passed that point, and undoubtedly switched off on I, since it could not be otherwise. By a necessary chance, while the first cars of the train were engulfed in the sand hillock, which covered it up (imagine that the line H is too short for the engineer to have had time to avoid the accident), the yoke chain of the last car was broken, and so the last carriage was forced by the baggage car to descend as far as D, on the track, which was slightly up-grade, since it went into a sand hillock. Then after going down to H and back to D, you saw the carriage and Signor Petito in the doorway. Your Signor Petito opened the carriage door, perhaps to throw himself out, as soon as he was aware of the imminent catastrophe, and as the latter caused a shock, it closed the door on the head of your Signor Petito.

"Now, having despoiled Signor Petito of his clothing, you walk into the fields to read his papers. When you return the carriage is no longer there. Now, then. Since there was a de-

clivity, and since there was a wind, the carriage, after having rolled as far as H, is found on the line A—B, where the trainmen certainly have found it by this time. Do you understand now? Do you understand all except that you did not see the train pass D? You are deaf sometimes, M. Longuet?"

"I have already had the honor of telling you so."

"Imagine that you were deaf while you were waiting for the train at D. You did not hear then?"

"No, but I should have seen it."

"Already you did not hear it. That is much. Possibly you turned your head for three seconds. Three seconds, that is to say, one second and thirty hundredths longer than is necessary to see an express train of four carriages pass before you, which, being late, made 120 to the hour. M. Longuet, the train disappeared, or, rather, seemed to disappear, because you were deaf and turned your head for a brief space of time."

M. Longuet raised his arms to the limit toward the vaults of the catacombs.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### *Lost in the Catacombs*

WHEN M. Longuet had recovered from the emotion that M. Mifroid's explanation of the train had caused him, he went through his pockets and handed over to M. Mifroid a revolver and a large knife that he had found in Signor Petito's pocket.

He was now perfectly rational and felt free from the influences of Cartouche. He, however, dreaded the return of these fancies, and asked M. Mifroid to accept these articles in order to defend himself should he again be possessed with this evil spirit.

Continuing the search through his pockets, he produced seven lamps like those of M. Mifroid, and so between them they had thirteen of these lights, which would give them 520 hours of continuous light. They, however, worked out that they could do ten hours a day without light on

account of sleep, and their calculations gave them fourteen hours of light per day.

"M. Longuet," said M. Mifroid, "you are wonderful. Cartouche himself could not have done better; but what is the good of carrying them around with us? They will only be a nuisance. Are you hungry, M. Longuet? How long do you think you could remain without food?"

"I am sure," he declared, "that I could remain this way forty-eight hours."

"Well, you will have to remain like this for seven days, perhaps. I will throw these ten lamps away, as after the third one I am afraid we shall not have much need of the rest."

"Where are you going?" asked M. Longuet.

"No matter where," answered his companion; "but we must go anywhere rather than stay here, for there is not a ray of hope here. We will reflect while walking. Walking is our only salvation, but by walking seven days we will risk all chance of arriving anywhere, unless we make a plan."

"Why not make an exact plan?" asked M. Longuet.

"Because I have observed in all the stories of the catacombs there were always marked plans which the unfortunate wanderers have lost. They were confused by the marked places, and not un-

derstanding anything about it, they became overwhelmed with despair. In our situation it is necessary to shun all causes for despair. You are not without hope, M. Longuet?"

"Oh, by no means, M. Mifroid. I will add, even, that were I not so hungry, your pleasant society aiding, I should not at all regret the roofs of the Rue Gerondo. You must tell me some stories of the catacombs, M. Mifroid, to let me forget my hunger."

"Why, certainly, my friend. There is the story of the 'Jailer,' and the story of the 'Four Soldiers.' "

"With which will you begin?"

"I am first going to tell you of the catacombs in general; this will make you understand why it is necessary to walk a long time to get out of them."

Here M. Longuet interrupted him, asking why in ending his sentences he always made a gesture with the thumb of his right hand.

"That means, M. le Commissioner, that the gesture has become a habit with you—putting on thumb-screws?"

M. Mifroid declared that that was not the reason. He often gave himself up to sculpture, and he explained to him that it was the habit of

a modeler. He buried his hand in his discoveries, just as he did in his clay."

M. Longuet expressed astonishment that a police commissioner should interest himself in sculpture. However, it afterward transpired that M. Mifroid's knowledge of this art was the means of their final escape from the catacombs.

M. Mifroid, in reporting the events of the catacombs, wrote as follows:

"The way that we were following was a vast passage of four or five meters high. The walls were very dry, and the electric light which lit our way allowed us to see a hard stone, devoid of all vegetation, even of moisture. That proof was not one to rejoice M. Longuet's heart, for he was beginning to be very thirsty. I knew that in the catacombs there were some threads of running water. I thanked heaven for not putting us on one of these threadlike streams, for we should only have lost time in imbibing there, and, moreover, as we could not carry away any water, it would only have made us more thirsty.

"M. Longuet objected to the idea that we were walking without caring where. I resolved to make him understand the necessity of walking on anywhere, in relating to him that which was the truth, that the engineers, when repairing the track, had

descended into the catacombs, and had sought in vain to discover their limits, and to find an outlet they were obliged to give it up, and they built those pillars as supports, and built the arch with masons' materials; they descended directly into the hole, before closing it finally over our heads. Not to discourage M. Longuet, I informed him that, to my knowledge, we could count on at least 520 kilometers of catacombs, but there was not a single reason why they should not have had more. Evidently, if I had not warned him immediately of the difficulty of getting out of there, he would have manifested his despair the second day of the walk.

“‘I think, then,’ I said to him, ‘that they have dug this soil from the third to the seventeenth century. For during 1400 years, man had removed from under the soil the materials that were necessary to construct above. If at any time there was not enough above, there was always more below. That above returns below, and goes out thence,’ and as we still found ourselves under the ancient Quarter d’Enfer, I recalled to him that in 1777 a house in the Rue d’Enfer was swallowed up by the earth below. It was precipitated to 28 meters below the soil in its court. Some months later, in 1778, seven persons met death

in a similar caving in. I cited still several more recent examples, dwelling upon the accident to persons. He understood, and said to me: 'In short, it is often more dangerous to walk above than below.'

"I kept on, seeing that he was impressed, and he spoke no more of his hunger, and forgot his thirst. I profited by it to make him lengthen his step, and I burst into the most entrancing song which came into my mind. He took it up, and we sang in chorus:

" 'Au pas, comerade, au pas,  
La route est belle!  
J'aura du frictiti la bas,  
Dans la gamelle!'

"It was this which made him keep step.

"One gets tired of singing very quickly in the catacombs, because the voice does not carry; so when we had got tired M. Longuet asked a hundred more questions. He asked me how many meters there were over our heads. I told him that that could vary, from the latest reports, from 5m.82 and 79 meters. Sometimes, I told him, the crust of earth was so thin that it was necessary to extend the foundations of the tombs as far as the bottom

of the catacombs. So that we might, in the course of our peregrinations, encounter the pillars of Saint Sulpice de St. Etienne du Mont, of the Pantheon of the Val de Grace, of the Odeon. These monuments are erected in some way on the subterranean pilings.

“‘Really, in the course of our peregrinations we risk encountering some of these subterranean pilings.’ But he had his own fixed idea.

“‘And in the course of our peregrinations, is there any chance of our coming upon an exit? Are there many ways out of the catacombs?’

“‘There are not,’ I replied; ‘there is need of them. First of all, there are egresses into the quarter.’

“‘So much the better,’ he interrupted.

“‘And other ways out that some know of, but by which none are ever admitted, but which exist, nevertheless, in the caves of the Pantheon, in those of the College of Henry IV, of the Hospital of the Undi, of some houses in the Rue d’Enfer, of Vangirard, of the Tombe Issoire at Passy, at Chaillot, at Saint Maur, at Clarenton, at Gentilly—more than sixty. In order to safeguard building construction, an ordinance was made which closed all the openings to the catacombs.

It is that ordinance, my dear M. Longuet, which has almost walled us in.'

"At that moment we struck an enormous pillar. I examined its construction, and said without stopping: 'Here is a pillar which was used by the architects of Louis XVI in 1778, then of the Consolidation.'

"'Poor Louis XVI!' said M. Longuet. 'He had better have consolidated royalty.'

"M. Longuet had taken the electric lamp from my hands, and did not cease to throw the rays to the right and left, as if he was looking for something. I asked him the reason of this, which would fatigue the eyes.

"'I am looking for some corpses,' he said.

"'Some corpses!'

"'Skeletons. I have heard that the walls of the catacombs are hung with skeletons.'

"'Oh, my friend'—I already called him friend, his serenity in such a serious emergency delighting me so much—'that ghastly tapestry is only a little longer than a kilometer. That kilometer justly called an ossuary, on account of the skulls, the radius, the cubitus, tibias, shin-bones, phalanges, the thorax, and other small bones which were made into unique ornaments. But what ornaments! Ornaments of three million skeletons,

that were brought from the cemeteries and acropolis of Saint Midard Clucy, Saint Lamdry of the Carmelites, the Benedictines, and of the Innocents.

“‘All bones, the little bones well sorted, arranged, co-ordinated, classified, labeled, which made on the walls and in the cross passages, roses, parallelopipides, triangles, rectangles, volutes, crevices, and many other figures of marvelous regularity.

“‘Let us wish, my friend, to reach that domain of the dead. It will be life. For there there are always a number of people. It is much frequented. But we are not there. What is one kilometer of dead men’s bones in five hundred?’

“‘Clearly! How many kilometers do you think we have made, M. Mifroid?’

“‘We have made nine.’

“‘What are nine kilometers in five hundred?’

“‘I induced M. Longuet not to make these useless calculations, and he begged me to tell him the story of the ‘Jailer’ and that of the ‘Four Soldiers.’

“‘That made two histories which were not very long in telling. There were only a few words in the first. There was once a jailer of the catacombs who became lost in the catacombs. They found his corpse eight days later. The second

related to four soldiers of the Val-de-Graces, who were descending, by the aid of a cord, into a well of eighty meters. They were in the catacombs, and as they did not reappear some drummers were sent down, who made the greatest noise that they could with their drums, but in the catacombs sound does not carry, and no one responded to the rolling. They hunted, and at the end of forty hours they found them dying in a blind alley.

“‘They had no moral courage,’ said Theophraste.

“‘They were foolish,’ I added. ‘Whoever is foolish enough to wander into the catacombs deserves no pity.’

“‘We were by this time come to a crossway, and M. Longuet turned to ask which way we would follow.

“‘I could answer him without delay. I said:

“‘Here are two galleries; which are you going to take? One goes almost directly back to our starting-point, the other directly away from it.’ As our design was to go away from our starting-point, M. Longuet showed me the first gallery.

“‘I was sure of it!’ I exclaimed. ‘But you disregard the entire principle. The experimental method has for centuries demonstrated that at the bottom of the catacombs all individuals who

wish to come back to their point of setting out (to the entrance of the catacombs) go away from it; then the whole logic of it is, to go away from one's point of starting out, one must take the way which apparently brings one back to it.' And so we decided on the gallery which seemed to us to bring us back over our steps, so we were sure of not having made a useless trip. That system was excellent, for it led us into a certain region of the catacombs that no one had visited before, since the fourteenth century, otherwise it would have been known."

## CHAPTER XXXII

### *A Dissertation on Fish*

**M.** LONGUET had from the first been complaining of his great hunger. He was getting very weak, and the end of the thirty-sixth hour saw him cursing their misfortune. However, what would have been the good of a little food? They were buried alive, and food would have been like a buoy to a shipwrecked sailor, alone in the middle of the ocean. It could only serve to prolong the agony.

M. Mifroid was more philosophical. He said that if there had been anything to eat to give them strength to continue their way, he would have been the first to suggest their stopping. But, with the exception of some mushrooms, probably poisonous, that his watchful eye had seen, there was nothing, so he urged M. Longuet to tramp on. M. Longuet, however, was unreasonable; he said he was hungry, and yet did not seem able to exert himself to get out of the catacombs.

He asked M. Mifroid question after question as to the catacombs and what he could eat to stay his terrible hunger. M. Mifroid tried to keep him interested by telling him of a visit he had made to the laboratory in the catacombs of M. M. Edwards. He told him of the fauna and the flora in obscure and cavernous places, of which, if necessary, he could make a meal.

Although the conversation was in vain, as far as its effects on Theophraste were concerned, M. Mifroid kept on. Hungry men are always eager to talk of things to eat, and although he didn't wish to acknowledge his hunger, he spoke of these things, and in endeavoring to put spirit into Theophraste allayed his own feelings.

"My dear friend," said he to Theophraste, "it may be that even if we don't get out of the catacombs we will not die of hunger. There is a stream somewhere here, and I have heard that there are certain fishes therein. They are not large fish, but there are incalculable quantities of them. They are of different sizes, and are not unpleasant to taste."

"Have you seen them?" asked Theophraste.

"No; but my friend, M. Edwards, told me about them when I visited the Fountain of the Fanaisetan."

"Is that far from here?"

"I can't tell you just now—all that I know is that this fountain was constructed in 1810 by M. Hericourt de Thury, engineer of the subterranean quarries. This fountain is inhabited by the copepodes."

"Are they fish?"

"Yes, they present some very singular modifications of tissues and colorative. They have a beautiful red eye. That is why they are called cyclops. That this fish has only one eye ought not to astonish you, for the *asellus aquaticus*, which lives as well in the running water of the catacombs, is a small isopode aquatic, which often has no eyes at all. Many species have, instead of an eye, only a small red pig snout; others have not a trace of one. They do not need to see clearly, since they live in darkness. Nature is perfect, and never found wanting. It only gives eyes to those who can use them, and does not give them to those to whom they are unnecessary."

Theophraste was struck by M. Mifroid's words.

"Then," said he, "if we continue to live in the catacombs we will end by not having eyes!"

"Evidently we will commence to lose the use of our sight and eventually become blind."

Then Theophraste insisted upon M. Mifroid

continuing his talk on these fish that could be found in the catacombs, and which they would, perhaps, have to eat. He was thus induced to give a sort of lecture on the modifications of the organs, and their excessive development, or their atrophy, following the ways frequented by individuals.

He continued: "So the fish of which I speak have no eyes. Their sense organs present modifications. For instance, the *asellus aquaticus*, even of the normal species, is armed with small, flat organs, terminated by a pore, that are considered olfactory organs. They are veritable olfactory cudgels, and these very fish which do not see know the space around them as well, possibly better, than if they could see in the light, so perfectly developed are these olfactory and tactile organs. Yes, my dear Theophraste, there are circumstances in the lives of some living things where the nose takes the place of the eyes, and the nose can thus acquire perfectly incredible dimensions. In the wells of Padirac there was found an *asellide* which possessed olfactory cudgels of an amazing length."

"Are there none in the running waters of the catacombs?" demanded Theophraste.

"No, none at all. Yet there are found many sorts of cavernical fish, such, for example, as the

niphugus puleamus, and this is found in great abundance. Their ocular organs are atrophied."

This, however, did not interest Theophraste, who had got his own idea.

"Do you know how they fish for them?" he asked.

"I cannot say," said Mifroid; "but we can surely get some sort of bait from the surrounding vegetation."

In a little while they both fell asleep, dreaming of this water which was to bring them relief. However, though their dreams were pleasant enough, there were surprises for them when they awoke.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### *The Meeting of the Talfa*

THEY had been sleeping on a soft soil or decayed vegetable matter, the sight of which had drawn from M. Mifroid the remark that it was a good omen for the near future. Their travels up to the present had been without incident, except for some differences of opinion between them. The subterranean galleries, lit up by the electric lamps, were sometimes vast, sometimes straight, sometimes rounded out like the vault of a cathedral, then square and regular, and so narrow that they had to crawl on their knees to get through. They had by this time become silent, except for a remark or two upon the variety of the strata they were passing through. Here was rock, here clay, here sand, and so on.

It could not, however, last much longer. For forty-eight hours they had been walking, without

coming across any water. M. Mifroid, however, hoped on, and we will soon see how justified he was. He hoped at least to come across some water or vegetation.

They estimated it to be about four o'clock in the afternoon, when Theophraste rose, and, tightening his belt, prepared to start on another tramp. This time he did not speak of his hunger or thirst, but walked on in that silence which weakness brings on men. They had been walking about an hour when it was noticed that the temperature had become much higher, and they both involuntarily took off their coats. Soon the perspiration began to pour off their foreheads, and they began to wonder how this change could have come about. Were they going toward the center of the earth? How could it be accounted for? In two hours the temperature had risen from 60 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit. M. Mifroid knew of some galleries 79 meters below the ground, but who could estimate what depth they were at now?

Their electric lamps spread their brilliancy around them as they advanced, now discussing the cause of this phenomenon. Suddenly the walls of the galleries spread out, and they found themselves in a cave of such large dimensions that even with their strong lights they could not see the farther

ends. What was their joy and amazement when they found before them a beautiful lake, the banks of which were covered with a thick carpet of moss, and in the crystal transparency of which they saw fish with beautifully colored scales. The fish had no eyes, and did not appear timid. They disported themselves in the water, coming quite close to where the two astonished men stood. They could easily catch them by leaning over. A flock of ducks were swimming about in the enchanted water.

M. Theophraste wept with joy on seeing this wonderful sight, and cried out softly, for he was afraid of disturbing them: "My friend, what did I say? Isn't this better than all earthly scenes?"

M. Mifroid felt somewhat humiliated at not knowing this before, but soon regained his influence over Theophraste, who was beginning to get excited over this wonderful sight. He made him sit down on the bank, so as not to frighten the ducks, and began explaining to him that what they saw was quite natural. He explained that it was caused by the soil, and that the water had collected here by the action of the heat.

Theophraste was for throwing himself into the water at once, and would have done so if they had not suddenly seen a sight which riveted them to

the very ground. Neither of them spoke. Their tongues were paralyzed. Their electric light revealed, far ahead of them, but not far enough for them to lose a single detail, the figure of a woman. She was quite naked, and had her back toward them. Never before had they seen a form so elegant and so graceful.

This first view, however, lasted only an instant, for she threw herself into the water and swam away with the grace and ease of a swan.

The apparition had the effect of making them forget the ducks, and they both forgot the hunger which gnawed at their vitals. They had hoped that she would not vanish, and that their presence would remain unnoticed.

After several plunges, the nymph, shaking the pearly drops from her beautiful body into the sleeping waters, emerged not far away from where they stood, but always with her back turned.

What quarry of Carrara ever gave to the world more precious or purer a marble? By what miracle of the divine fires can we contemplate those lines of definitive beauty? It was the form of a Greek statue, and her arms were as graceful as one could wish to imagine on the Venus de Milo.

They waited in silence for her to turn around,

while she disported herself on the green moss. Soon their curiosity was satisfied, and she suddenly turned. Neither of them could restrain a cry of horror, which made the Venus plunge back into the water. She had no eyes, and there was nothing in their place. Her ears, which were hidden from their sight by the profusion of hair, stood out like horns. But that which terrified them most was her enormous, snout-like red nose.

They had hardly recovered from their first surprise when another young female, clothed in a light tunic, came unexpectedly on the bank, holding in her arms a long gown. She also had a nose like the other, and no eyes.

The Venus came toward her companion on the bank, and the latter said: "They are silent now, and not saying a word."

"Ha, Saint Mary, they shall have no pardon! They are traitors. Do you know what our people are doing? Go and find out; I want to know."

She spoke in the purest French of the fourteenth century, and the delicacy and sweetness of her voice was like the rippling water of a brook. The two men watched and listened in amazement. They stood still and stared before them. They felt that a great miracle was being wrought.

Suddenly they were surrounded by thirty or

more men, who seemed to have come from out of the very rocks. They stood around them, gesticulating and talking vehemently, but in very low voices. They too had no eyes, but their ears were developed to a surprising size. On each of their hands they had ten fingers, and they had ten toes to each foot. As they came into the glare of the electric light, they held their hands up to their red snouts, as if they had smelled a disagreeable odor. They all mumbled in half-audible tones: "Lady Jane de Montfort, Demoiselle de Coucy," and it was easy to see that they referred to the ladies who had been disturbed. As they passed they felt the faces of the two men. They just touched them lightly, and in doing so moved away in an apologetic way. It seemed as if they were curiosities. They felt their eyes, their noses, and their ears, and some of them even put their fingers down their ears. It was evident they could not understand the smallness of their features.

Then one of them addressed M. Mifroid, and while apologizing for their curiosity, said he was astonished at their want of beauty.

By this time Lady Jane de Montfort and Demoiselle de Coucy were dressed, and M. Mifroid and M. Theophraste were presented to them.

The two men begged a thousand pardons for

their intrusion, and were about to explain their intrusion, when Demoiselle de Coucy took Theophraste by the arm, and Lady Jane took M. Mifroid, and they were conducted through the vaults surrounded by the crowd of men. It was difficult for them to prevent the men from poking their eyes out as they fumbled over their faces.

They had been forty-eight hours without food, and their hunger was extreme, and now they were to be taken away from where there was food.

The two women had taken possession of their lamps under the pretext of being troubled by the odor.

They tried to tell the people that they were exhausted, but so many questions were put to them that no opportunity presented itself.

They had by this time reached a large chamber. There was a dull light, and they felt the presence of thousands of people. M. Mifroid managed to get one of the lamps, and quickly pressing the button, lit up the vast hall, in which were crowded thousands of these weird men, all with the large noses and ears, but with no eyes. Some of them walked on all fours, and some had such long noses that they looked like pelicans.

Finally they were informed that they were at the entrance to the meeting hall.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### *M. Mifroid Performs on the Stage*

ONE would never have expected to drop from one of the numberless ways in the catacombs into a city of twenty thousand inhabitants. However, upon reflection, one would wonder why men, taken out of their natural environment, would not be susceptible to the same natural changes as the animals.

Arajo relates to us how he saw flocks of blind ducks come out of the caverns of the subterranean lake of Zirhnitz. One is bound to believe that these ducks were the products of ducks which once saw clearly, but which were shut up by some accident in the bowels of the earth, in the midst of obscure waters. And so there is some logic in the theory that if the family of a man in the first years of the fourteenth century was by accident confined in the catacombs, it would live there and produce offspring. At the end of the third generation they

would have forgotten the existence of the open world. Of course they would continue to speak the language, and as no strange element would mix with it, it would preserve its purity through centuries.

Then in the darkness they would lose the use of their eyes, but develop their sense of touch as blind men do. Hence the excess of digits on their hands and feet. Then the loss of one sense always develops all the other senses in proportion. After centuries these super-developed senses become abnormal, and the nose and ears develop accordingly in size.

And so it was with these people of the Talfa. Their features had developed to an extraordinary extent, and their idea of beauty in the human form was based on the excessive development of these features. Demoiselle de Coucy was considered the most beautiful of all the Talfa.

They had entered the large meeting room, and M. Mifroid attempted to again light his lamp, but the crowd cried out in such disgust that he was persuaded to keep it out. He endeavored to converse with those near by. Their names were among the most illustrious in France at the time of the Battle of Crecy. But they addressed themselves in a tone so ineffably sweet, and all the uproar they

tried to make resulted in an enchanting murmur. It was difficult to imagine that such sweet and honeyed words could emanate from such ugly beings.

M. Mifroid was seated on a chair next to Lady Jane de Montfort, who continually felt his face and touched his ears. While her curiosity was great she approached him with such delicate gracefulness that he hadn't the heart to restrain her.

Soon there was a great silence, and a concert began. To Mifroid and Theophraste nothing was to be heard. Occasionally the people applauded quietly, but the absolute silence of the performers was a striking feature. Not a word was heard.

Soon there was much talking again around the two men, and they learned that it was intended that they should go down on the stage. This was the reason why they had been dragged to the meeting hall. They were to be exhibited as a phenomenon. Theophraste willingly consented, as his companion had promised him a good duck for dinner. M. Mifroid was not so easily persuaded, but at last acquiesced, and they descended to the stage. They all clamored for a song, and M. Mifroid started one of the old French songs of the fourteenth century, which he had learned as a boy. He had hardly started the first verse, when every-

body in the hall called out for him to sing lower.

He started again, this time moderating his voice, but again they called to him to sing lower. The third time he could hardly hear himself, so low was his voice, but this did not satisfy his audience, and he left the platform with his song unfinished. He afterward learned that the sense of hearing of these people was so developed that they could understand silent music.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### *A New Trade*

AFTER the concert the party went out of the hall, and passed on to a striking mansion in which a sumptuous repast was served. M. Mifroid had by this time become quite intimate with the Lady de Montfort. He confessed that he was unable to withstand the allurements of the lady. It must not be forgotten that the darkness was most conducive to the failure of all his honorable intentions. However, we will not dilate upon what happened, but Mme. de Montfort weakened him with her caresses and M. Mifroid at last succumbed to the temptation. After a while she slept, and he opened the door and went out.

Although they had been among the Talfa several hours, neither M. Mifroid nor Theophraste had had the inclination to see what kind of habitation they were in. Weakness and the great crowd of Talfa had prevented them.

M. Theophraste had conducted himself in such a manner during the meal, eating everything to excess, that he had had to be carried out. It was done according to the directions of Mme. de Coucy, who, it is feared, would not at that time have carried on her love intrigues.

Now M. Mifroid found himself alone, and he decided to investigate. As he went out of the room, he realized that he was in a subterranean city.

That which struck him most was the total absence of doors. All the shops were open to the passers-by, and the most precious articles as well as the poorest were exposed for any one to take who wished.

He was very much amused by the profusion of the columns, by the incredible carving in the friezes, by the reliefs and sculptured caps to the pillars. They were so extravagantly flowered, with the lines so intricate, that only a master hand could have worked them. A curious point about all this work was that it only reached as high as a man could touch. Above that point the design mixed in with the vaulting of the catacombs and was left to the imagination. But whatever was seen of this beautiful carving could only be compared with the marvels worked by the early sculptors of India or the ivory-carvers of Burma.

In the search M. Mifroid did not come upon any large building. He had frequently heard Mademoiselle say: "Ah, St. Mary!" And so he tried to find some temple in order to find out what their religion was. His search, however, was in vain. The only building of any size was the concert hall where they had been earlier. It was certainly more wonderful than all the rest, but except for this one example all the architectural marvels were applied to the private buildings. The meanest aperture, the poorest door, were little gems of art. There were no statues in the squares.

M. Mifroid was just starting back to his lady's house, when he met a party of young Talfa, armed with cross-bows. "Ah!" thought he, "here are the guards." He was, however, quickly undeceived, for they had smelled the odor from his lamp, and they came up to him. They told him they were going for a hunt. The hunting season started every year on the rising of the waters of the great lake. At this time there were always a lot of rats, which were killed in thousands and used for many different things in the Talfa households.

Thanks to the directions they had given him, he soon found his way back to Lady de Montfort's house. There he found her waiting at the window,

and as soon as he got near her, she waved her handkerchief.

They were soon in conversation again, and he found out that she was not married.

She asked him what he did on the top of the earth, and he told her he was a commissioner of police. She listened intently, and asked what Theophraste did.

“He is a robber,” said M. Mifroid.

Evidently neither a commissioner of police nor a robber was known among the Talfa, and soon the news spread that the two strangers had unknown trades, and a great crowd gathered, who begged them to show them what they did on earth.

M. Mifroid sent to fetch Theophraste.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### *A Robber is Caught*

WHEN Theophraste was brought up to M. Mifroid, he was in a pitiful condition. He had given himself up to the worst debauchery, and was still under the influence of his excesses.

However, M. Mifroid explained to him what was required of him. He had to demonstrate to the Talfa people the duties of a police commissioner, and Theophraste was to act the robber and be arrested. However, owing to Theophraste's condition, M. Mifroid had his misgivings as to the result of this practical demonstration.

The crowd by this time had assumed enormous proportions, and by special permission an electric lamp was lit. All present held their noses as if the lamp smelled.

Then M. Mifroid instructed Theophraste. He told him to run into a store and take some things, and run out. This was an easy matter, as none

of the stores had doors, and Theophraste commenced to act the robber. He ran into a hatter's and seized all sorts of rat-skin caps. He instinctively put them under his coat, and hid them about his person, looking furtively around him in a most natural way.

All this time the people around the store looked on noiselessly. No one said anything and not the least sign of surprise was shown. One man at length said: "Look at that fellow providing himself with hats for a year. It was then that M. Mifroid came upon the scene, and seizing Theophraste by the arm, said in his most official tone: "In the name of the law, I arrest you!"

This did not produce the desired effect, as the people still preserved their dumbness, and did not appear at all impressed.

Mlle. de Coucy asked M. Mifroid what he meant by "In the name of the law." But as the Talfa people had no law, he found it difficult to explain.

He told her how the police was an institution to protect the person and property of peaceable citizens. They were the guardians of the law. He, however, could not make them understand, as they thought Theophraste had a right to the hats.

Lady de Montfort explained that they had no need of laws to protect the state, as they had no

state, nor the property, as they had no property, and as individuals never conflicted no law was necessary to protect persons. All the Talfa people did was to hunt for their food and make clothing from the skins of rats. Marriage to them was a prehistoric institution which appeared unworthy of the human state. They only half believed its existence as a sacred legend. Their unions were of a very liberal nature, and did not require any ceremony or oath. Consequently they lived together peacefully and happily.

A curious feature of these Talfa people was the entire absence of any code of morals. There was no difference made between a virtuous woman and one of loose habits. Everybody lived on the same footing and enjoyed the same privileges. Things happened according to taste and temperament, and nobody thought anything about it. Thus conflicts of passion were reduced to a minimum. No one had rights, as no one possessed anything.

Thus lived the Talfa people. No laws, no trouble, and no police commissioners.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### *The Escape from the Catacombs*

**M.** THEOPHRASTE LONGUET had by this time quite forgotten the ties which bound him to the world above, and while M. Mifroid was abandoning himself to the fancies of Lady de Montfort, he was indulging in excesses of debauchery with the Talfa people.

The time came when M. Mifroid became tired of this kind of life. They had been in the catacombs three weeks and had become acquainted with the habits of all the Talfa people. M. Mifroid longed to get into the open world, where people had public affairs and a properly organized society. He felt confused, and a feeling of weariness came over him.

Theophraste was for stopping there altogether. He said he had never had such a time before. He had been playing the tricks of Cartouche on the Talfa people, and he felt more free in spirits than

he had felt on earth. He was so persistent in his determination to stay that M. Mifroid decided to appeal to Mlle. de Coucy. He felt that Theophraste was a nuisance to the Talfa, and the best way to get him out was to appeal to the people themselves. Theophraste had even suggested putting out his own eyes to be like these people.

Upon telling Mlle. de Coucy, however, he got a totally different answer than he expected. She told him that the Talfa people had decided to let them go as soon as twenty thousand people had passed their fingers over their faces. She explained that the Talfa had forever been trying to get into the upper world, and therefore they must all visit these men from the coveted realms and see what they looked like before their departure.

M. Mifroid calculated that it would take some time to complete this ceremony, and so he devised a plan by which they could deceive the people and escape. They were never long alone, and all day and all night fingers were feeling their faces and were thrust into their eyes, nose or mouth. It was during these operations one night that M. Mifroid devised his plan of escape. He would utilize his powers as a sculptor.

Obtaining some clay from the bed of the lake he modeled two masks like those of the Talfa peo-

ple, with large noses and ears. Then under the pretense of acquiescing in Theophraste's wishes, who dreamed only of becoming a Talfa, he put one of the masks on his face, and the other he wore himself. The deception was perfect, and although they met several Talfa they were not recognized, in spite of much finger feeling.

M. Mifroid took the precaution of providing himself with food, and they both started out. Theophraste laughed with delight at the bold deception, and in his merriment he did not realize that M. Mifroid had led him out of the domains of the Talfa. They walked for five days. Their eyes had by this time become accustomed to the darkness, and they were able to make good headway. On the fifth day they came across some human bones, and M. Mifroid uttered a prayer of thankfulness, for here were signs of a civilized people. They were on the outskirts of the city of Ossarium.

Theophraste had been in a very depressed state of mind since leaving the Talfa. He had continually reproached M. Mifroid for getting him away. Upon coming upon the first signs of human existence, M. Mifroid drew his attention to them and declared that in a short time they would be out in the light of day again.

Soon they came across a skull with the signs of a candle near it, showing Catholic burial, then the gallery seemed to dip down, the ground became wet, and they found themselves wading through mire. Water dripped on them from crevices above, and the air became cold and damp. At last M. Mifroid recognized a part of the gallery, and again he sent a prayer up to heaven for his deliverance.

There was a Latin inscription cut out of the rock: "*Ossa arida audite verbum Domini*," which M. Mifroid recognized as being near an entrance to the catacombs.

They had not proceeded far when voices were heard, and they found themselves in a large vault. This was a very different place than the hall of the Talfa, though. There were ordinary human beings here. Through the whole length of the hall chairs were arranged. The place was lit up by numerous candles enclosed in human skulls. At the end was a kind of rotunda where evidently the musicians sat, for a large circle of music-stands were arranged. A number of people were present getting ready for a feast. No one took any notice of the two strangers, as it was thought that they were invited guests, and they strolled through, watching the proceedings. Soon the musicians

began to arrive one by one, and the people sat around making pleasantries, and passing the time away in talk. It was half-past one.

It was indeed a curious sight. Here down among the dead, with coffins and bones all around, had assembled a crowd to listen to music, and to make revelry. Fifty musicians had assembled, among whom M. Mifroid recognized many of the orchestra of the Opera House.

Soon the music started, Chopin's "Dead March" being the first piece. After listening for some time M. Mifroid tapped Theophraste on the shoulder, whispering to him that it was time to go. They hurried along, and ten minutes later they found themselves on the earth again.

They walked together for about half an hour, neither uttering a word. They were both thinking what a wonderful experience they had gone through. The Talfa nation, with its peculiar habits, had impressed them wonderfully, and neither wished to disturb the other in contemplation of it all.

Suddenly Theophraste said: "What are you waiting for, M. Mifroid? Do you intend to arrest me?"

M. Mifroid had, in the emotion of the moment, forgotten his original mission. He, however, had

become very friendly with Theophraste in the catacombs, in spite of his excesses, and so, now that he was confronted with the necessity of arresting him, he said: "No, my friend, I shall not arrest you. My mission was to arrest Cartouche, but as Cartouche is no more, I cannot arrest him. Besides, you, M. Longuet, are my friend."

They then parted at the Buci Crossway.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### *An Old Friend*

**A**FTER the footsteps of M. Mifroid had died away, M. Longuet remained standing at the street corner. A feeling of intense sadness and loneliness had come over him. He could not decide on whether to go back to his wife or to leave her altogether. But what would he do? If he left her he would have no home, and he would be an outcast from the world. He wandered for a long time through the streets, until he found himself opposite a door in the Rue Suger. He rang the bell and a man in a blouse and paper cap opened the door in response.

"Good-evening, Ambrose," said Theophraste. "Are you up at this hour? I would not have disturbed you, but many things have happened since I last saw you."

He had not seen him since the evening he came to ask his opinion on the watermark on the old paper.

"Come in," said Ambrose cordially. "Make yourself at home. How are all the folks at home?"

"I will tell you all to-morrow. What I want now is some sound sleep. I am tired out."

Ambrose showed him his own bed, and soon Theophraste was stretched out and asleep.

The following day Ambrose tried to get some news from Theophraste, who, however, observed an absolute silence, and would not be persuaded to say a word. He was like a dumb man. He passed his time for two days in examining words and papers, which filled his pockets, and in writing, but always without saying a word.

One morning as he was preparing to go out, Ambrose asked him: "Where are you going?"

"I am going to see M. Mifroid about the details of a trip we took together, and of which you will learn when I am dead."

"You are going to kill yourself?"

"Oh, no. There is no use in doing that. I shall die soon enough. But I shall come to your house to die, my dear Ambrose. After going to see M. Mifroid, I shall go to see my wife."

"I did not dare to ask about her. Your sadness and silence made me fear some domestic trouble. It is all so inexplicable."

"She still loves me," said Theophraste.

Before letting him go, Ambrose made him change his underclothes, and lent him a clean shirt, as he said he could not see his wife decently in the rags he was in at present.

"I will put it on," said Theophraste, "for my own sake, as my wife won't see it. I'm not going near her. I shall only see her from a distance. I only want to learn if she is happy."

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### *The Final Tragedy*

IT was nine o'clock in the evening, the season was well advanced, and a heavy mist hung over the land. M. Longuet went up the long drive toward the "Villa Flots de Azure." His hand trembled as he cautiously pushed open the little garden gate. He crossed the garden step by step, to look around. His whole demeanor was one of evil intent. There was a light in the parlor, and the window was half open. With short steps Theophraste advanced, and stretching his head he peered in.

He fell back groaning. Placing his hands over his face, he tore the white locks on his forehead. The sight had frenzied him, and he felt a pang of agonizing jealousy go through his frame.

Marceline and Adolphe were there, locked in affectionate embrace! This is what he had come to see! His wife no doubt was happy, but in quite a different way from what he expected.

He sat down on the ground and wept with rage. Rising, his curiosity forced him to get nearer and listen.

What he heard only made him worse, and he inwardly felt that he was about to commit a great crime. However, he battled against this feeling, and ran away from the house. Something compelled him to return!

In a state of sanguinary expectation, comparable to nothing in the history of crimes, he again retraced his steps, found himself in the garden again, and without waiting to look in he bounded into the parlor.

M. Lecamus and Marceline were taken aback, and both uttered a cry of surprise. Their surprise was soon turned to terror, as Theophraste, seizing some stout cord, ran to Adolphe, and with superhuman strength and agility bound him hand and foot. Dragging him to the hall, he tied him to a newel post and left him. It was all done with such lightning speed that Adolphe hadn't the time to resist the first attack, and he was as a child in the ferocious grip of Theophraste.

Turning around he ran to the sitting-room, and seized an old sword that was hanging on the wall. Marceline in her terror called to Lecamus to mind

his ears. She feared that he would undergo the same treatment as Signor Petito. However, nothing was further from Theophraste's thoughts, for turning on Marceline he struck her down with one blow. Two seconds later he was holding her head up to Adolphe, saying: "Haste thee now to kiss these lips while they are still warm."

Adolphe could do nothing, so he touched the lips of the dead woman, and then fell in a faint.

Theophraste ran upstairs, and brought down from the garret an old trunk, and in less than twenty-five minutes he had the body of Marceline cut up and placed in it. He closed the trunk with a key, and putting it over his shoulder he said good-by to Lecamus. However, he might have said good-by to the door-post, for Lecamus was in a dead faint and choking from the cords around his neck.

Theophraste and the trunk disappeared in the darkness.

That same night one could have seen a man on a barge in the Seine discharging the contents of a trunk into the river. They could also have heard him murmur: "My poor Marceline, my poor Marceline! It was not your fault."

At dawn Theophraste knocked at Ambrose's door. Ambrose saw that he was greatly agitated,

and asked him in sympathetic tones what had happened.

Theophraste could not reply. His tongue seemed riveted to his mouth. He crawled to the bed, and, lying down, wept.

At last Ambrose was able to console him sufficiently to get these few words from him: "I felt the flame of murder pass through my veins. The impulse to kill had returned to me after centuries. The same impulse that had made me decapitate my faithless wife, Marie Antoinette Neron, two hundred years previously, and to throw her body into the river. I forgive M. Lecamus. When I am dead go and look for him and tell him that I name him my testamentary executor. I leave him all my worldly goods. He will know what to do with the little oaken chest, in which is locked the terrible secrets of the last months of my sad life."

Having said these words, Theophraste raised himself on the pillow, for the oppression increased, and he knew that the end was near. His look was no longer of this world. His gaze was fixed on some imaginary object far away, and in a doleful voice he said: "I have seen—I see—I turn again toward the square ray of light."

And he expired!

THE END











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